

The University of Southern Mississippi
The Aquila Digital Community

Dissertations

Spring 5-2011

Factors Influencing International Students' Academic and Sociocultural Transition in an Increasingly Globalized Society

Chung-Hsien Hsu
University of Southern Mississippi

Follow this and additional works at: <https://aquila.usm.edu/dissertations>



Part of the [Bilingual, Multilingual, and Multicultural Education Commons](#), [Educational Administration and Supervision Commons](#), and the [Educational Leadership Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Hsu, Chung-Hsien, "Factors Influencing International Students' Academic and Sociocultural Transition in an Increasingly Globalized Society" (2011). *Dissertations*. 429.
<https://aquila.usm.edu/dissertations/429>

This Dissertation is brought to you for free and open access by The Aquila Digital Community. It has been accepted for inclusion in Dissertations by an authorized administrator of The Aquila Digital Community. For more information, please contact Joshua.Cromwell@usm.edu.

The University of Southern Mississippi

FACTORS INFLUENCING INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS'
ACADEMIC AND SOCIOCULTURAL TRANSITION
IN AN INCREASINGLY GLOBALIZED SOCIETY

by

Chung-Hsien Hsu

Abstract of a Dissertation
Submitted to the Graduate School
of The University of Southern Mississippi
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

May 2011

ABSTRACT

FACTORS INFLUENCING INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS’
ACADEMIC AND SOCIOCULTURAL TRANSITION
IN AN INCREASINGLY GLOBALIZED SOCIETY

by Chung-Hsien Hsu

May 2011

This study is a mixed-method study. It consists of a quantitative study and a qualitative study. The quantitative study focused on international adult learners’ experiences of adaptation to American academic and social cultures. The qualitative study then investigated their experiences of cultural transition.

Based on the definition of globalized influences (Finger, 2005) and existing studies discussing the effects on globalized educational environments (Merriam & Young), factors related to globalized influences were selected and used to examine the extent to which these factors have affected international students’ adaptation to learning and life in the American university. Additionally, the other two variables, student group size and students’ major were also examined.

This study adopted transformative learning theories (Mezirow, 1991, 2000; Kegan, 1994) and applied phenomenological qualitative research steps to explore and analyze international students’ experiences of cultural transition in learning and living in the U.S.

The international students participating in this study were from 32 different countries and were all actively enrolled (2009-2010 academic year) at a 4-year university in the southeastern United States. A total 115 international students participated in the quantitative study through e-mail or hard copy of survey questions. Most of the sample

were Asian graduate students and were science majors. Sixteen out of the 115 international students participated in the qualitative interview.

The International Student Transition Survey (ISTS), which consists of 80 5-point Likert scale items and eight demographic questions, was used to gather data about international students' social and academic transition to life in the U.S. A Multivariate Multiple Regression statistical analysis revealed significant correlations between five factors of adaptation, and international students' academic and sociocultural adaptation.

Independent Simple t-Tests revealed no statistically significant relationships between international students' group size or academic majors, and their adaptation to academic learning and sociocultural life.

The qualitative portion of this research involved administering eight to 10 interview questions to participants who completed the above survey questions and volunteered to be interviewed to explore the perceptions of their own transition experience in the U.S. The transcripts were analyzed by the steps of phenomenological research methods. The findings indicated globalization has significantly influenced the students' transition experiences in academic learning and sociocultural life.

COPYRIGHT BY
CHUNG-HSIEN HSU
2011

The University of Southern Mississippi

FACTORS INFLUENCING INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS'
ACADEMIC AND SOCIOCULTURAL TRANSITION
IN AN INCREASINGLY GLOBALIZED SOCIETY

by

Chung-Hsien Hsu

A Dissertation
Submitted to the Graduate School
of The University of Southern Mississippi
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Approved:

W. Lee Pierce

Director

James T. Johnson

Lilian H. Hill

Anne M. Burgess

Susan A. Siltanen

Dean of the Graduate School

May 2011

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I sincerely thank everyone who has helped me complete this dissertation. First, I would cordially thank all of the international students who participated in my study. Your experiences of transition in the U.S. is very valuable and enriches the research of adult education.

Secondly, I would like to thank my committee, Dr. W. Lee Pierce, Dr. Lilian Hill, Dr. James Johnson, and Dr. Ann Burgess. Without all your instruction and assistance, I do not believe I could have completed this dissertation. Particularly, I would like to thank my academic advisor, Dr. Hill, for her constant instruction, advice, and caring. She has repeatedly reviewed and helped me revise my work, and encouraged me to publish part of my dissertation. I deeply appreciate Dr. Hill's hard work for me.

I would like to thank my writing tutor, Erik Johnson. For me, he is more than just a writing tutor. He has been working with me since I started my doctoral program. Working with international student like me is not easy work. He needed to understand my way of writing and thinking with an Eastern cultural background; additionally, he had to be more patient with dealing with my anxiety especially before the due date of every assignment. He is a truly good friend. Thank you very much, Erik. I appreciate everything you have done for me.

Then, I would like to thank my American mom, Mrs. Gail Young. Thank you very much for adopting me as your daughter, helping in improving my English, driving me to school every day, and accompanying me on the journey of completing my doctoral program. I count myself so lucky to have you be my mom and one of my best friends. In addition, several of my friends, Lydia Frass, Emily Richmond, Phillip Pearson,

Doris Vines, and Jacque James, have also given me the most support for my dissertation in many ways. Thank all of you very much for your friendship and hard work on my behalf.

Finally, I would like to thank my dearest family in Taiwan. I really appreciate your love and caring support for me. Thank you, and I love you all.

And lastly, thanks to all my American friends who have helped me in so many ways.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT.....	ii
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	iii
LIST OF TABLES	vii
CHAPTER	
I. INTRODUCTION	1
Purpose of the Study	
Background	
Research Questions	
Hypotheses	
Definitions of Terms	
Assumptions	
Delimitations	
Justification of the Study	
II. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE	18
Globalization	
Globalization and American Higher Education	
Theoretical Background	
International Student Adaptation	
Conclusion	
III. METHODOLGY.....	34
Introduction	
Research Design	
Population and Sample	
Instrumentation	
Variables	
Data Collection Procedures	
Data Analysis Procedures	
IV. RESULTS.....	49
Introduction	
Quantitative Data	
Quantitative Analysis	
Qualitative Study	

Qualitative Data Analysis

V	CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION.....	94
	Summary	
	Conclusions	
	Discussion	
	Limitations	
	Recommendations for Policy or Practice	
	Recommendations for Future Research	
	Closing Statements	
	APPENDIXES.....	118
	REFERENCES.....	138

LIST OF TABLES

Table	
1.	Connection between Factors and Globalization3
2.	Connection between Theories and Factors6
3.	Participant Demographic Information51
4.	Reliability of Study Variables52
5.	Descriptive Statistics53
6.	The Multiple Regression Result for the Five Predictors and Academic Adaptation55
7.	The Multiple Regression Result for the Five Predictors and Sociocultural Adaptation56
8.	Interviewee Demographic Information62
9.	Comparison of American Students' and International Students' Learning Backgrounds83

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Purpose of the Study

This study examines factors influencing international students' academic and sociocultural transition in an increasingly globalized society. This study has three goals: (a) to examine international students academic and cultural adaptation to the U.S., (b) to determine whether or not students with larger co-national support groups have an easier or harder time adapting to the U.S., and (c) to determine whether or not students with particular majors have an easier or harder time adapting. Of additional interest are ways in which Globalization has affected the international students' adaptation to U.S. social culture and academic culture, when compared to past studies.

Background

To pursue these goals, it was necessary to first determine what variables affected international students' adaptation to U.S. social culture and academic culture. A review of existing studies and literature from the past decade was conducted. Quite a few studies were found dealing with international students' academic and sociocultural transition in American higher educational institutions (Alfred, 2002; Cemalicular, Falbo, & Stapleton, 2005; Chirkov, Vansteenkiste, Tao & Lynch, 2007; Furnham & Bochner, 1986; Kim, 2006; Lee, 2007; Lin, 2001; Mullen & Tallent-Runnels, 2006; Perucci & Hu, 1995; Trice, 2004; Ward & Kennedy, 1994; Ye, 2006). Other recent studies (Barlow, 1999; Finger 2005; Greenblatt, 2006; Merriam, Caffarella, & Baumgartner, 2007; Merriam and Young, 2008; Peterson, Briggs, Dreasher, Horner & Nelson, 1999; Taras & Rowney, 2007) have identified factors of world culture which are actively changing due to globalization, and

have studied the impact of those changes on the U.S. education system. In fact, these factors connect and correlate with one another (see Table 1).

For this study, the significance of globalization has to do with its effects on the American system of higher education. For international students who must adapt to life in America, and to the culture in U.S. colleges, globalization has changed the nature of the environment. This change has been driven because the U.S. academic system plays an integral role in the American economy (Townes, 2008); and the soliciting of international talent, both in terms of students and faculty, has increased as its profitability became ever more apparent (Townes, 2008). Essentially, classrooms in American universities have become increasingly multicultural as U.S. universities have recruited ever-greater numbers of international students from a growing pool of foreign nations (Taras & Rowney, 2007).

Since this study examines the effect of globalization on international students' transitions to life and learning in the United States, an additional concept of importance is the perception of "Americanization" (Mendis, 2005). According to Mendis (2005), Americanization refers to the extent to which a non-American culture has been influenced by U.S. culture, including: American popular culture, U.S. business practices, American language, and technology from the United States. Americanization can be observed from outside a culture, and noticed by individuals within the culture.

The factors of globalization utilized in this study were selected based on current research of the phenomenon of globalization and adult education (Finger 2005; Merriam, Caffarella, & Baumgartner, 2007; Merriam and Young, 2008). In terms of these major adult education scholars' observation and understanding, globalization has been resulting

in increased transnational economic cooperation, greater worldwide technological development, and the spread of a more uniform worldwide culture. With these recent studies, five major independent variables were selected for this study: (a) Comfort with Oral English, (b) Social Interaction, (c) Motivation, (d) Online-Support, and (e) Perception of Instructors. The dependent variables were: (a) Socio-Cultural Adaptation, and (b) Academic Adaptation.

This study has tried to explore how the international students' cultural adaptation to learning and living might have changed in the increasingly globalized U.S. society. The correlation between these seven factors referring to the selective questions in this study and the influence of globalization is delineated in Table 1. Further, this study explored international students' experiences in cultural adaptation, especially in terms of transformations to the international students' original cultural values, through qualitative interviews (Mezirow, 1991; Kegan, 1994).

Table 1

Connection between Factors and Globalization

Variables \ Globalization	Transnational Economic Cooperation	Worldwide Technological Development	Uniform Worldwide Culture
Comfort with oral English ^{IV}			X
Social interaction ^{IV}		X	X
Motivation ^{IV}	X		
Online support ^{IV}		X	X

Table 1(continued).

Variables	Globalization	Transnational Economic Cooperation	Worldwide Technological Development	Uniform Worldwide Culture
Academic adaptation DV			X	X
Sociocultural adaptation ^{DV}				X

Note. The above table delineates the links between the three factors of globalization and the five independent variables (^{IV}) and the two dependent variables (^{DV}) employed in the theoretical framework of this study.

Supporting these five factors of adaptation, the theoretical framework of this study adopts two Transformative Learning Theories: Psychocritical (Mezirow, 1991) and Psychodevelopmental (Kegan, 1994). The five independent variables in this study which are factors affecting adaptation were drawn from a survey of existing literature examining transformation and globalization. Each of these factors is centrally important to one or more of the adult learning theories utilized by this study (see Table 2). Furthermore, the two dependent variables, academic adaptation and sociocultural adaptation are completely related to culture. The process of adaptation can be seen as the student redefining their cultural perspective as to what is possible, what is right, what is best, what is good, and what is acceptable. The behavior and experience of international students in individual classes, and in the entire university, and in society outside of the university is bound and defined by language, perception of others, perception of self, social interaction, and availability of support.

For example, the behavior of an international student who sits quietly in an American classroom, without interacting, can be explained by cultural background, since the student may feel that they should not make noise in class, or that they should not speak because their mastery of English is not sufficient. According to Mezirow, “learning is understood as the process of using a prior interpretation to construe a new or revised interpretation of the meaning of one’s experience as a guide to future action” (Mezirow, 2000, p. 5). Throughout their lives, people can face challenges to their frame-of-reference; in response, they must reflect and transform. Therefore, in terms of Mezirow, the process of adult learning is generally a process of transformative learning.

Kegan (1994) discusses the important role of culture in shaping frame-of-reference, “some of our meaning-making may derive from our membership in various subgroups of the human family;” for example, we may be shaped by, “social class, ethnicity, gender, and culture” (p. 206). Since it is impossible to avoid social class, ethnicity, gender, or other culturally-defined factors of self identity, culture can be seen as the locus of the meaning-making concepts and definitions which must be identified and examined before transformation can occur.

Additionally, this study utilizes Sociology’s Social Capital Theory (Lin, Cook, & Burt, 2001) and Psychology’s Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 2002). The central idea of social capital theory is “investment in social relations with expected returns” (Lin, 2001, p. 6). Lin argues that individuals engage in social interactions and build social networks in order to produce beneficial outcomes for their own purposes (Lin, Cook & Burt, 2001). Social Capital Theory examines the complications and possible interactions for individuals attempting to adapt to a new culture. Self-Determination

Theory (SDT) studies what drives people to make decisions which are critical for their future. SDT, moreover, defines contextual factors that can influence people's motivation and performance (Deci & Ryan, 2002). SDT, which considers international students' inner thoughts and decisions and which takes into account the influence of their social environments, provides a framework with which to understand and analyze their motivation to study abroad. Both theories relate to the process of international students' transformative learning experience in America.

Table 2

Connection between Theories and Factors

Variables \ Theory	Transformative Learning (Mezirow)	Transformative Learning (Kegan)	Social Capital (Lin)	Self-Determination (Deci & Ryan)
Comfort with oral English ^{IV}	X	X		
Social interaction ^{IV}	X	X	X	
Motivation ^{IV}				X
Online support ^{IV}	X	X	X	
Perception of instructors ^{IV}	X	X	X	
Academic adaptation ^{DV}	X	X	X	
Sociocultural adaptation ^{DV}	X	X	X	

Note. The above table delineates the links between the theoretical frameworks employed in this study and the five independent variables (^{IV}) and the two dependent variables (^{DV}).

Research Questions

Due to the influence of globalization and the increasing population of students from varied cultures in American universities, more and more students have to make changes and adapt or adjust their perspective regarding learning and living. Basically, students must transform in order to deal with the discrepancy between the cultures they have previously experienced and American culture. Researchers mentioned above have studied this. Five variables (Comfort with Oral English, Interaction, Motivation, Online-Support, and Perception of Instructors) have been determined to be important in mediating this transition for international students. Additionally, it seems reasonable to propose that, the more access to support that international students could obtain, both in real life or through the Internet, the easier it will be for them to deal with difficulties that they might encountered in their lives. Lastly, this research investigates the premise that international students majoring in science, since they often spend large portions of their time studying or working in a lab, may be able to avoid facing many elements of American culture, and thus avoid the trouble of transition. For these reasons, three quantitative research questions were chosen for this investigation:

Quantitative Research Questions

Research Question 1: Do the five Independent Variables (Comfort with Oral English, Interaction, Motivation, Online-Support, and Perception of Instructors) have a significant impact on the adaptation of international students to American social culture and academic culture?

Research Question 2: Does the size of international students' co-national support group affect their adaptation to American social culture and academic culture?

Research Question 3: Does international students' field of study affect their adaptation to American social culture and academic culture?

Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1: There is statistically significant relationship between each of the five independent variables and international students' academic adaptation.

Hypothesis 2: There is statistically significant relationship between each of the five independent variables and international students' sociocultural adaptation.

Hypothesis 3: There is a statistically significant difference between the academic adaptation of international students with larger co-national support groups and international students with smaller co-national support groups.

Hypothesis 4: There is a statistically significant difference between the sociocultural adaptation of international students in the sciences and international students in the humanities.

Qualitative Research Questions

Question 1: What changes have international students undergone in order to make a successful transition to the U.S. culture?

Question 2: How have international students been changed by the experience of living and learning in the United States?

Definitions of Terms

Academic Adaptation – academic mores and customs, especially in regards to the cultural definitions of student and teacher relationships including appropriate behavior for students and teachers, and also including student and teacher expectations for class performance in standard and online classes, can vary dramatically in Western universities

from international students' past experiences and expectations regarding college life and behavior (Lee & Sheared, 2002).

Adaptation – for this study, refers to the choices and decisions of an individual, especially in terms of their conscious decisions mediating their habits and behavior (decisions, actions, choices) (Purcci & Hu, 1995)

Comfort with Oral English – refers to the degree to which international students feel competent to use audible speech to communicate with Americans, in situations or context that are academic, purely social, or transactional (Kim, 2006; Lee, 2007).

Globalization – According to Finger (2005), globalization consists of a movement of economic integration, of cultural homogenization, and of technological uniformization. The impact of globalization is worldwide, and involves increased transnational economic cooperation, greater worldwide technological development, and the spread of a more uniform worldwide culture.

Humanities Students – The second group of international students are collectively called Humanities Students. They are international students whose majors are classified as humanities, including education, business, psychology, language communication, public relations, literature, journalism, art, music, philosophy, and others. Humanities students spend significant portions of their time in classrooms or studio environments where conversation or discussion is a critical component of the learning environment. Additionally, writing persuasive or argumentative papers, and receiving feedback regarding the quality of their communication, is often a major element in the education of humanities students.

International Students – are students who are studying in a country other than

their country of origin. This implies that the student is faced with a number of difficulties, often including the necessity of studying and interacting socially and academically in a second language, as well as facing differences in social and academic mores, customs, and expectations. In this study, international students are those from countries other than the United States, pursuing degrees at a university in a south-eastern U.S. state.

Motivation – refers to international students’ reasons for deciding to study abroad. Common reasons include the desire to improve one’s employment prospects or opportunities, the desire to meet family expectations, the belief that America will provide a better educational environment, the desire to learn or practice English, and the desire to fulfill personal goals. Because of the increasing number of international students being accepted into American universities, as a byproduct of the financial opportunities opening to U.S. universities as the world becomes more globalized, increasing numbers of international students feel inspired, for various reasons, to study in America. At the same time, some international students are enrolled in U.S. institutions because the non-U.S. companies they work for are paying for them to study to improve their English. Also, some international students are studying in the U.S. simply because their parents desire it, and not because they actually wish to. In all of these cases, and in other possible scenarios, individual international student’s motivation for being in the U.S. are hypothesized, in this study, to impact their social transition and their academic transition (Chirkov, Vansteenkiste, Tao & Lynch, 2007).

Online Support – refers to international students’ level of social interaction through various internet venues or technologies. Internet-based support often involves international students exchanging information with each other, communicating related to

online classes, communicating with distant friends or family, making new friends, and otherwise having access to support that is not physically present (Ye, 2006a, 2006b) .

Perception of Instructors – refers to the degree to which international students perceive their instructors, in general, or in particular, to be neutral, hostile, friendly, helpful, unhelpful, sympathetic, unsympathetic, understanding, or not-understanding of the situation of international students and their needs and problems. Perception of instructors specifically includes international students’ feelings regarding their teachers’ methods or ways of teaching, their test standards, the demands of their assignments, and the teachers’ attitudes, behaviors, and expectations regarding differing cultures (Mullen & Tallent-Runnels, 2006).

Psychocritical Perspective – Transformative Learning Theory, developed by Mezirow (2000), stresses critical reflection and the development of a psychocritical perspective in order to examine the ways in which adults make sense of their life experiences.

Psychodevelopmental Perspective – Transformative Learning Theory, adopted by Daloz (1991), views transformative learning as a process that is holistic and intuitive. Under Daloz’s interpretation, transformative learning is integral to the process of lifelong personal development.

Science Students – While examining international students studying in American universities, this study distinguishes between those whose majors are in fields related to science from those students whose majors are in fields related to the humanities. “Science students” are those whose majors include engineering, medical science, computer science, polymer science, mathematics, physics, and chemistry. The important qualifier is that

Science students' spend significant portions of their time working in laboratories and much of their learning consists of the acquisition of rote knowledge, theory, or techniques.

Self Determination Theory (SDT) – Self-Determination Theory (SDT) investigates people's inherent growth tendencies and innate psychological needs with specific attention to the ways in which those tendencies and needs either support or undermine the individuals' attempts to master and integrate their experiences into a coherent sense of self (Deci & Ryan, 2000).

Social Capital Theory – A theory examining individuals' social interactions and social networking activities in terms of the ways in which those interactions and networks can profit the individuals (Lin, Cook & Burt, 2001).

Social Interaction – refers to international students' relationships and degree of interaction with other international students (from their country and from other countries), with Americans, and with their long-distance family, friends, and acquaintances (from their home country or previous living situations) (Perucci & Hu, 1995; Trice, 2004).

Socio-Cultural Adaptation – Due to cultural differences, international students need to adjust or change their perspectives in order to adapt to their host culture (Caney & Martine, 2005; Krapels & Davis, 2005).

Transformative Learning – Defined by Mezirow (1991), refers to the process whereby individuals, when faced with a disorienting dilemma, problem, or obstacle, such as the situation in a new environment, which challenges their established frame of reference, change or adjust their frame of reference. This change in perceptions and definitions can be seen as a transformation.

Transition – with the ideas coming from Mezirow's (1991) transformative

learning process, transition refers to an individual's transformation within their new and changing situation and environment (changes in perception, attitude, and expectations).

Assumptions

This study will use a survey instrument, the International Student Transition Survey (ISTS). It is assumed that participating international student responses are accurate and truthful. Since student responses are both confidential and anonymous, students receive no benefit from deception. Additionally, it is hoped that, since the study is intended to help improve the situations of international students, they will be motivated to be as accurate and truthful as possible. This study will also employ qualitative research.

Delimitations

The scope of this study was delimited in the following ways:

1. International students enrolled in the academic year between 2009 and 2010 at a 4-year university in the southeastern United States. No other international students were sampled.
2. Only the factors and survey questions regarding international students' academic and sociocultural adaptations were utilized in this study.
3. The major theoretical foundation applied to this study was based on Mezirow's (1991, 2000) and Kegan's (1994) transformative learning theories.

Justification of the Study

General Benefits of this Study

The purpose of examining the potential changes is to provide practitioners, adult educators, and school administrators who are working with international students with

current information about the particular worries, difficulties, and sources of stress which affect current international students. With updated information, more effective services can be provided for international students. As an example, knowing that face-to-face instruction in U.S. classrooms can be very stressful for international students; adult educators could adjust their instruction by offering more hybrid classes, in which part of the interaction takes place online, which may be a less stressful environment for international learners.

Research Implications

For adult educators, this research is important because gaining a clearer understanding of the transformative learning of adults from different cultural backgrounds can increase our overall understanding of the process of transformation. Mezirow (1991) points out that not all learning is inherently transformative. For example, learners can learn by “adding knowledge to their meaning schemes or [by] learning new meaning schemes” (p. 223). However, considering that international students are faced by a culture and cultural expectations that are often very foreign, perhaps directly conflicting with their previous worldview, it is likely that their transition is transformative in nature. In this way, the cultural transition of international students in a host country is useful to observe because it can be considered inevitable. In order to achieve a degree of comfort and to succeed academically, international students must learn and transform. In a new host country, international students often experience a culture that is quite different from their culture of origin, or from cultures they have experienced and adapted to in previous host countries.

Additionally, the process of adapting to a new culture can be considered a

example of adult learners' transformative learning, although it is shaped by each individual student's cultural background. For example, international students tend to value aspects of their culture of origin, and their relations to people in their home culture more when they are surrounded by a new culture, than when they lived in their own culture. Kegan (1994) discusses this when speaking of international students' transformation, "In the face of a crisis, organizational or personal, some people seem to move first to preserve, protect, repair, or reinstate their connections or relations to others. Once these are secured, they move to recover their own balance or position" (p. 217). While attempting to maintain their equilibrium and sense of self, international students have to more or less reshape their thinking, their values, and their way of life in order to adapt to the new sociocultural setting of their host country.

Globalization (Finger, 2005) is often defined as a homogenization of the cultures in different countries around the world. In this context, it seems likely that international students' process of transformation should be easier than it has been in the past, since international students should have previously been exposed to the norms and expectations of their new host country. However, while research has been conducted into the transformation undergone by international students, no research has specifically examined the influence of globalization on their adaptation. In this way, this study will benefit research in the field of adult education.

Potential Benefits to the Development of Adult Education

It is proposed that this research will have two main benefits to the development of Adult Education. One has to do with adult educators' practice, and the other has to do with the theory behind adult education. In terms of practice, the more information adult

educators have regarding the process of immigrants' adaptation and education, the more ideas educators will have as to how to improve education for immigrants. In terms of theory, this study examines the cross-disciplinary connections between theories in sociology, psychology, and adult-education, as they relate to international students' adaptation. This comparison will be useful for anyone who has familiarity with the theories from one discipline, but is less familiar with similar or related theories from other disciplines.

This research, which examines the cultural transition of international students in a globalized society, should provide current information, of particular value to professionals in the field of adult education, including researchers, instructors, and administrators in formal or informal adult educational institutions. This study will enable adult education practitioners to renew, update, or broaden their perspectives on the difficulties faced by international learners and ways in which those difficulties can be remediated by providing facilities, situations, support, or intervention.

In addition to helping practitioners understand the difficulties of international students, this research should be of use to adult educators working with immigrants, who can suffer similar problems with learning and adapting to a new culture. Many immigrants in America were previously international students, as can be shown by the growing population of foreign-born faculty in American universities (Bonetta, 2007). This is important because the current literature examining the impact of formal and informal socialization on immigrants and non-English language learners is quite limited (Lee & Sheared, 2002). This study indirectly contributes to that issue due to the similarity and incidence of overlap between immigrant and international student populations.

Another benefit of this study is the way in which it synergistically adopts theories from other disciplines, such as Social Capital Theory (Sociology) and Self-Determination Theory (Psychology), for use with Adult Education's Transformative Learning Theory. The combined application of these theories can extend the knowledge available to adult educators and enrich the development of adult education by helping researchers learn more about the impact of culture on international learners.

Another way in which studying international students' transformation benefits the field is that, by examining and identifying the cultural attitudes and preferences of diverse groups, made visible as they attempt to transform in a new cultural setting, underlying aspects of human nature can be more clearly seen. That is, when people struggle through the process of transformation, the influence of their culture on their perceptions, attitudes, and expectations becomes more apparent. In this way, frameworks of perception, attitude, and expectation can be identified as cultural, rather than as underlying universal attributes of humanity.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Globalization

Currently, the number of international adult learners attending U.S. schools is higher than ever before (Barlow, 1999; Greenblatt, 2006; IIE, 2008; Merriam, Caffarella, & Baumgartner, 2007; Taras & Rowney, 2007). This increase in the number of adult learners from various cultural backgrounds attending U.S. schools is occurring at a time when the influence of globalization is more obvious and prevalent than it has been in the past (Merriam, Caffarella, & Baumgartner, 2007). Finger (2005) defined globalization as “a movement of economic integration, of cultural homogenization, and of technological uniformization.” (p. 269) Merriam and Young (2008) also comment on globalization and the growing connectivity of the world:

There can be no doubt that what happens in one part of the world today affects the rest of the world. We are in an era of globalization, of being interconnected economically, culturally, technologically, and educationally with the rest of the world. Through the global economy, technology, travel, and immigration and migration, we come into contact with people from all over the world. (p. 72)

Essentially, globalization has three main features: increased transnational economic cooperation, greater worldwide technological development, and the spread of a more uniform worldwide culture. Considering the pervasive nature of globalization, it seems inevitable that it has had an effect on students’ experiences in U.S. universities, particularly in regards to the international students.

Globalization and American Higher Education

According to the annual report on international academic mobility published by the Institute of International Education (IIE, 2008), with support from the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, the growing number of international students enrolled in American universities has become a vital indicator for getting globalized U.S. higher educational environment: 623,805 international students enrolled in U.S. higher education institutes in the 2007- 2008 academic year, a 3% increase from the 2006 - 2007 numbers, and 6% above the previous all-time high of 586,323 reported in 2002 - 2003. Overall, there has been a thirty percent increase in the last ten years (IIE, 2008).

With the enrollment of such big numbers of international students, institutions of American higher education can greatly benefit from cultural diversity in many ways (Taras & Rowney, 2007). First of all, worldwide recruitment of students provides the best available human talent. Second, having classmates from different countries provides American students first-hand experience of work in multicultural settings. Third, diversity of experiences and backgrounds enriches in-class discussions and group meetings (Taras & Rowney, 2007). Finally, Townes (2008) reported that international students and their dependents spent more than \$15 billion in the U.S. during the 2007-2008 academic years (Townes, 2008). Through educational cooperation, international students expect to obtain better higher education in America while simultaneously benefiting the American economy (Townes, 2008). The influence from globalization has been specifically seen on international students' pursuit of higher educational degree in U.S.

International students' academic and sociocultural transition in U.S. universities has been an issue studied by scholars in various disciplines over the years (Alfred, 2002; Barlow, 1999; Cemalilar, Falbo, & Stapleton, 2005; Chirkov, Vansteenkiste, Tao & Lynch, 2007; Finger, 2005; Furnham & Bochner, 1986; Greenblatt, 2006; Kim, 2006; Lee, 2007; Lin, 2001; Mullen & Tallent-Runnels, 2006; Perucci & Hu, 1995; Peterson, Briggs, Dreasher, Horner & Nelson, 1999; Taras & Rowney, 2007; Trice, 2004; Ward & Kennedy, 1994; Ye, 2006a, 2006b). It is therefore not a new issue. However, it seems likely that globalization, which is characterized by greater economic cooperation, increased interaction of individuals through the internet, and more intercultural communication and exchange between and within countries, will affect international students' transition in regards to learning and life in American universities.

For one thing, educating international students is big business in the United States. The growing importance of international students to American educational institutions makes it likely that those institutions will increase their efforts to recruit international students. It is important, therefore, to examine the factors affecting the adaptation of international students to U.S. culture, overall, and to life at U.S. universities both from the perspective of educators, who will be dealing with greater numbers of international students, and from the perspective of U.S. university administrators, who will wish to provide useful services and systems to draw more international students and their associated revenue. Furthermore, knowledge of the factors affecting adaptation of international students to U.S. culture can be valuable to the international students themselves, as they decide what universities to attend, how to allocate their time, and what teachers and classes to take.

Theoretical Background

The theory that is the basis for this study is Transformative Learning Theory, as described by Mezirow (1991), as well as major theories and related theories. Strictly speaking, international students' academic transition reflects their individual cultural origins in learning; this can be seen in the students' learning styles, in their attitudes towards the learning environment and the instructors, and in the students' language expression. This study examines the ways in which international students face the necessity for adaptation to a new society and a new academic setting.

Transformative Learning

Transformative learning theory in the context of individuals is divided into three distinct branches, according to Merriam, Caffarella and Baumgartner (2007): Psychocritical (Mezirow, 1991), Psychodevelopmental (Dalo, 1999; Kegan, 1994) and Psychoanalytic perspectives (Boyd, 1991). Mezirow's Psychocritical Theory is concerned with the ways in which adults make sense of their life experiences. A primary emphasis of Psychocritical Theory is critical reflection. As an extension of Psychocritical Theory, Dalo's Psychodevelopmental perspective views Transformative Learning as more holistic and intuitive. According to Dalo (1999), the goal of Transformative Learning is life-long personal development. The third branch of Transformative Learning Theory, Boyd's Psychoanalytic perspective, sees transformation as an inner journey of individuation, in which the ego learns to discern itself in the collective unconscious (Merriam, Caffarella & Baumgartner, 2007).

For this study, the approaches of both Mezirow and Dalo are particularly useful, since both address peoples' need to make meaning out of their experiences, and both note

that individuals are often in a state of developmental transition (Taylor, 2008).

Psychocritical Transformation Theory and Psychodevelopmental Transformation Theory both apply to the process of adjustment faced by adult learners who are encountering and integrating new and different social and academic environments.

Essentially, the field of Adult Learning addresses the processes by which individuals derive information and meaning from their professional endeavors and from their daily life in society. In this context, digesting new information and coping with difficulties both lead to learners' becoming more aware of their established perspectives and transforming their perspectives as they adapt to their changing life situation.

According to Mezirow (2000), "learning is understood as the process of using a prior interpretation to construe a new or revised interpretation of the meaning of one's experience as a guide to future action" (p. 5). Throughout their lives, people can face challenges to their frame-of-reference; in response, they must reflect and transform. Therefore, in terms of Mezirow, the process of adult learning is generally a process of transformative learning.

In order to transform, adult learners must make adjustments in their frame-of-reference, which is rooted in their cultural background. When discussing frame-of-reference, Mezirow (2000) explains that, "we appropriate symbolic models, composed of images and conditioned affective reactions acquired earlier through the culture or the idiosyncrasies of parents or caretakers—a highly individualistic "frame of reference" – and make analogies to interpret the meaning of our new sensory experience" (p. 5).

It is not easy for people to reframe or even clearly perceive their installed values, traditions, and ways of thinking, even when it becomes necessary because they find

themselves in the midst of a new cultural system. Kegan (1994), a scholar who supports Psychodevelopmental Transformation Theory, discusses the important role of culture in shaping frame-of-reference. “Some of our meaning-making may derive from our membership in various subgroups of the human family;” (p. 206) for example, we may be shaped by, “social class, ethnicity, gender, and culture. These subgroups may endow us with their own meaning-regulative principles, ways we know or see that derive from our membership in these subgroups” (p. 206). Since these cultural subgroups are all-inclusive, culture becomes the locus of those meaning-making-principles that must be realized and transformed when people encounter challenges in life. Examining the role culture plays in shaping individuals’ frame-of-reference makes it clear that people adapting to life in a new culture must inevitably undergo transformation.

Theories from disciplines other than Adult Education are also important in regards to the transformation of international students. For example social capital theory in sociology and self-determination theory in psychology can both be related to the ways in which international students undergo transformation, filtered through their cultural background, when they find themselves in a new sociocultural environment.

Social Capital Theory

The central idea of social capital theory is “investment in social relations with expected returns” (Lin, 2001, p. 6). Lin argues that individuals engage in social interactions and build social networks in order to produce profits for their own purposes (Lin, Cook & Burt, 2001). Social capital theory focuses on the resources embedded in one’s social network and the individuals’ ability to access resources that may benefit their actions (Lin, 2001). In terms of Lin’s view, individuals’ actions serve to either maintain

or gain valued resources. With this in mind, social capital theory provides a useful framework for viewing international students' interaction with Americans and vice versa. Additionally, social interactions with faculty and institutional members can serve an important role because they can provide access to critical resources and opportunities which are available through the institutional setting (Trice, 2004). For these reasons, the ability to communicate orally and understanding of the social skills necessary to make friends with people in a host country are essential for international students if they are to obtain valuable social resources.

Self-Determination Theory

Self-Determination Theory (SDT) is an investigation of people's inherent growth tendencies and innate psychological needs in regards to how their tendencies and needs either support or undermine their attempts to master and integrate their experiences into a coherent sense of self (Deci & Ryan, 2000). SDT, moreover, defines contextual factors that can influence people's motivation, performance (Deci & Ryan, 2002). SDT provides a framework to understand and analyze international students' motivation to study abroad which embraces their inner thoughts, their decisions, and which takes into account the influence of their social environments.

International Student Adaptation

International students, as sojourners surrounded by a new and different culture and society, are faced with the necessity of adaptation and transformation. This study examines, in particular, five characteristics associated with international students' transition: (a) oral English communication skills (comfort with oral English), (b) social interaction with American citizens (interaction), (c) motivations to study abroad

(motivation), (d) social supports through the internet (technology), and (e) American classroom environment (perception of instructors). In addition, the theoretical framework of the study adopts transformative learning theories (Kegan, 1994; Mezirow, 2000) in the field of adult education and other relevant theories from sociology and psychology (Alfred, 2009; Furnham & Bochner, 1986; Lin, 2001; Ryan & Deci, 2000, 2002) to help explain how these five factors are supported.

Socio-Cultural Adaptation

When people migrate to a new society, adaptation is a major issue for them. Interactions with local residents in the new society are unavoidable and newcomers must inevitably make adjustments in perception, attitude, and expectations due to the differences between the old culture and the new surrounding culture (Chaney & Martine, 2005; Krapels & Davis, 2005). This necessity for social and cultural adaptation has a large impact on peoples' daily lives. From difficulties with language and basic communication to dealing with the desire for familiar and preferred foods, newcomers have to experience and face all kinds of challenges. Chaney and Martin (2005) explain the intercultural phenomenon:

When people live in another culture for an extended period of time, they have choices to make concerning how much of the new culture they are going to accept and to what extent the new culture will override, complement, or be rejected based on values and behaviors of the home culture. (pp. 103-104)

Culture shock, as discussed by Chaney and Martin (2005), perfectly describes the challenges faced by international students. International students in American higher educational institutions need to manage their life which now involves social interaction

with local Americans, the necessity for effective English communication in social and academic situations, their desire to meet their learning and employment goals, and use of the internet to keep in touch with family and friends. Basically, their lives within the U.S. inevitably necessitate socio-cultural adaptation.

Academic Adaptation

Academic mores and customs, especially in regards to the cultural definitions of student and teacher relationships including appropriate behavior for students and teachers, and also including student and teacher expectations for class performance in standard and online classes, can vary dramatically in Western universities from international students' past experiences and expectations regarding college life and behavior (Lee & Sheared, 2002). Protocols for student-to-student interaction and student-teacher interaction can be very different. Expectations for student behavior, time-management skill, writing competence, organizational skill, and public speaking ability can also be quite divergent from what was customary in the international students' home cultures (Britton, Chamberlain, Davis, Easley, Grunden & Williams; 2003). International students must simultaneously face difficulties communicating in class, especially in online or hybrid classes, while dealing with the stress of their aspirations for the future, and their perceptions of their various professors' views and responses to them, as foreign students. Lee & Sheared (2002) explain that this is particularly important that adult educators be aware of international learners difficulties and divergent backgrounds:

This becomes even more significant when we look at how we work with individuals whose first language is not English. Those teaching individuals whose primary language is not English, and whose socialization patterns have been

developed in another country, must pay attention to how we can use formal and informal socialization to help them perform effectively as students in our classrooms. (p. 28)

In other words, adult educators teaching adult learners whose first language is not English may need to develop understanding and particular skills to deal with their learners' specific needs. This is true both in higher educational institutions and in non-academic situations and learning environments, because students' native cultures and expectations intrinsically shape their learning and their lives.

Comfort with Oral English

English is arguably the language used most frequently in the world. Additionally, internet and mass media development have further enhanced the prevalence of English. Most online information is delivered in English; most movies show English subtitles.

With the influence of globalization, learning English seems to become a necessary requirement for students at every level, all over the world. For international students who pursue a higher educational degree in U.S., English proficiency, especially oral communication, strongly relates to their academic success and social interaction (Kim, 2006; Lee, 2007; Perrucci & Hu, 1995; Trice, 2004). Whether or not international students' informal conversation with Americans may cause anxiety or fear has not been reported; however oral communication in academic settings may. Oral English expression and communication for non-native international students highly influence their academic performance in the classroom. Lee's study demonstrates fear of negative evaluation of speech makes international students, particular from East Asia, reluctant to participate in class discussions (Lee, 2007).

A study by Kim (2006) showed results which are consistent with Lee's.

Classroom activities related to listening and speaking show their relative importance to academic success for international students from East Asia. It is worth noting that this study focuses on East Asian international graduate students in non-science and non-engineering fields, and the results of the study demonstrates that these international students are most concerned about leading class discussions, as well as asking questions in front of the class (Kim, 2006). Oral communication and expression for international students in non-science and non-engineering fields seems to be more stressful.

Social Interaction

From 1985 to 1995, fast economic development in Asia (Perucci & Hu, 1995) allowed an increasing number of Asian international students to study abroad. The United States, with its advanced technology and favorable policies for foreign students, has become the largest host country (Perucci & Hu, 1995). The growing number of international students presents challenges to host schools in language, culture and discrimination (Perrucci & Hu, 1995; Trice, 2004). For international students in America, the normal problems of coping with a new academic setting are related to contact with U.S. students, language skills and perceived discrimination. Contact with U.S. students is probably facilitated by English language proficiency. Limited English language ability may cause less self-confidence or perceived discrimination on the part of international students when communicating with American students. Thereby, the social interactive experiences of international students are positively influenced by a number of individual and social resources (Perrucci & Hu, 1995; Trice, 2004).

International students' social networks with American peers are correlated to important benefits because contact with American students positively influences international students' academic experiences (Trice, 2004). This emphasis on the importance of social facilitation from native nationals is an application of social capital theory (Alfred 2002; Lin 2001; Trice, 2004). Social capital theory focuses on "the resources embedded in one's social network and how access to and use of such resources benefit the individual's actions" (Lin, 2001, p. 55). International students, through this theory, build social network as well as gain the access to improve their English language proficiency, adjust cultural difference between U.S. and their own countries, and deal with problems encountered in their academic adaptation and daily life. Trice's study (2004) further discusses the social network support from the international students' co-nationals and American nationals. While international students establish static relationship with others from their country, this does not address the fact that they are less likely to build social relationships with Americans.

Social network support including that received from Americans and international students' co-nationals can facilitate international students' abilities to cope with problems encountered in learning and daily life (Miyazaki, Bodenhorn, Zalaquett & Ng, 2008). Some of the most up-to-date studies (Miyazaki, Bodenhorn, Zalaquett & Ng, 2008; Wei, Heppner, Mallen, Ku, Liao & Wu, 2007; Ye, 2006b) focus more on how social interaction helps international students to cope with social and psychological difficulties. International students may make their efforts to seek support from people or institutions in the host country as one way of coping, instead of differentiating "the types of support

that one can theoretically receive through communication with others” (Miyazaki, Bodenhorn, Zalaquett & Ng, 2008, n.p.).

Motivation

The influence of globalization has made the world like a village. Migration within countries has been more prevalent. International students with different motivations choose to pursue higher education abroad. International students’ motivations to study abroad are also associated with their intrinsic willingness to adjust and adapt themselves into the host countries. Through self-determination theory (SDT) (Deci & Ryan, 2002), self-determined motivation for international students’ studying abroad predicted the success of cultural adaptation. In addition, a desire to obtain a good education could support their successful professional career (Chirkov, Vansteenkiste, Tao & Lynch, 2007).

In a following study utilizing the same questionnaire researchers (Chirkov et al., 2008) tested the influence of self-determination, motivation, and goals for studying abroad on international students’ adjustment to life in a host country (Canada), by utilizing ethnic samples of international students. The major result of this following study largely supported the previous result that the autonomous motivation for moving abroad to get an education is a powerful predictor of international students’ adjustment (Chirkov, Safdar, Guzman & Playford, 2008).

Online-Support

The most distinguished factor which has contributed to globalization is the development and application of the Internet. Because of this advanced technology, international students’ are experiencing an adaptation in learning and life in the U.S. different from what international students did in past decades. In addition to alternative

delivery options including online classes, the more important feature is new types of social support. Social support for cross-cultural adaptation and the expectation of academic life in a host country can be achieved through the Internet (Ye, 2006a, 2006b). Relationships established in the host country, and online ethnic social groups can provide international students access to more distant, unknown resources that can help sojourners adjust to daily life in a new culture, but can not help academic difficulties. Long distance relationships in the home country help to alleviate international students' psychological difficulties (Ye, 2006a). However, the relationships with various online groups may be changeable. The international students in online ethnic social groups who have less acculturative stress perceive a high level of informational and emotional support from the same groups (Ye, 2006b).

Differently, the studies (Cemalicular, Falbo, & Stapleton, 2005; Ward & Kennedy, 1994), support that host national identification positively affect both international students' sociocultural and psychological adaptations through computer-mediated communication (CMC). Additionally, due to the development of CMC, many international students are more likely to become familiar with the U.S. culture even before becoming a sojourner. This result in the study may explain that globalization might make the maintenance of home identification not as important for international students' adaptation as in the past (Cemalicular et al., 2005)

Perception of Instructors

In addition to online social support, online classes have dramatically changed the classroom environment in higher education. However, whether in traditional classrooms or online classes, international students have different challenges and perceptions in their

learning as they face their instructors' academic demands (Mullen & Tallent-Runnels, 2006; Britton, Chamberlain, Davis, Easley, Grunden & Williams; 2003).

In the traditional classroom, the professor's instructional styles and techniques, such as lack of inclusive examples and illustrations used by instructors, and group projects with American students, create the most anxiety for international students (Britton et al., 2003).

A study by Britton et al. (2003) focuses on international students whose majors are in business. International students in Business and Management are the top population in comparison with other majors in U.S. (IIE, 2003). These international students expect that professors will use an international perspective and use more examples from other countries because countries' shared concern with commerce and economy has led to worldwide globalization (Britton et al., 2003). This expectation may not be unique to the Business field, but also exists for other disciplines.

The difference that occurred between online and face-to-face students' perceptions come from their instructors' affective support (Mullen & Tallent-Runnels, 2006). In the online class, instructors' affective support is impressed through listening and encouraging students to share ideas. The psychological aspect of the classroom environment is difficult to achieve online. Therefore, online instructors might need to give further consideration to this aspect of online instruction (Mullen & Tallent-Runnels, 2006). While this study did not discuss international students' perspectives about learning in online class, the learning experience in online class for all subjects participating in the study does not demonstrate a significant difference.

Conclusion

It is hoped that this study, occurring when globalization is causing an ever-increasing population of international students to study abroad, and likewise leading to increasing immigration, will help adult educators effectively deal with learners who are having to adapt and transform, both in their learning and in their lives. Additionally, it is hoped that American universities will benefit from increasing awareness of the challenges international students face, and of their needs and difficulties.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This dissertation investigated the influence of globalization on international students' cultural and academic transitions. This study had three goals: (a) to examine international students academic and cultural adaptation to the U.S., (b) to determine whether or not students with larger co-national support groups have an easier or harder time adapting to the U.S., and (c) to determine whether or not students with particular majors have an easier or harder time adapting. Of additional interest are the ways in which globalization has affected the international students' adaptation to U.S. social culture and academic culture when compared to past studies on international students' adaptation. In addition to a quantitative methodology, qualitative interviews were performed to further explore international students' transitions.

To pursue these goals, it was necessary to first determine what variables affected international students' adaptation to U.S. social culture and academic culture. A review of existing studies and literature from the past decade was conducted. A number of studies were found dealing with international students' academic and cultural transition in American higher education institutions (Alfred, 2002; Cemalicilar, Falbo, & Stapleton, 2005; Chirkov, Vansteenkiste, Tao & Lynch, 2007; Furnham & Bochner, 1986; Kim, 2006; Lee, 2007; Lin, 2001; Mullen & Tallent-Runnels, 2006; Perucci & Hu, 1995; Trice, 2004; Ward & Kennedy, 1994; Ye, 2006). Additionally, several studies were found whose focus was on the influence of globalization on American higher education

institutes (Barlow, 1999; Finger, 2005; Greenblatt, 2006; Peterson, Briggs, Dreasher, Horner & Nelson, 1999; Taras & Rowney, 2007).

For the quantitative portion of this study, in accordance with the studies reviewed, five major independent variables were selected as those shown to distinctively affect international students' academic and cultural transition in American universities: (a) Comfort with Oral English (the student's skill and confidence with oral English communication), (b) Interaction (the frequency and type of social interaction the student has with American citizens), (c) Motivation (the student's motivation to travel and study abroad), (d) Online-Support (the student's access to social supports through the internet), and (e) Perception of Instructors (the student's perception of the American classroom environment). The dependent variables chosen were: (a) Socio-Cultural Adaptation, and (b) Academic Adaptation.

For the qualitative portion of this study, 16 interviewees were asked eight or ten questions from one of two different series, depending on whether or not the interviewee perceived themselves as having changed while living and learning in America. These two series were designed to further explore either the students' awareness of cultural differences, or the changes that occurred in their original cultural values.

Research Design

This research project included a descriptive quantitative study and a qualitative study. The purpose was to determine the relationship between the five independent variables (Comfort with Oral English, Interaction, Motivation, Online-Support, and Perception of Instructors) and two dependent variables (Socio-cultural Adaptation, and Academic Adaptation) in a population of international students. In addition, international

students' actual and individual experiences of transition were explored via a series of qualitative interview questions.

The descriptive quantitative study utilized a survey instrument, the International Student Transition Survey (ISTS), an 80-item questionnaire, to gather data about international students' social and academic transition to life in the U.S. The ISTS was created using questions drawn from scales in six previous studies on international student's adaptation, each of which was proven to have high validity. Furthermore, the majority of the sections on the ISTS have been verified to have high reliability.

An additional qualitative portion of the research involved administering eight to 10 interview questions to 16 participants who had completed the 80-item quantitative survey questions for this study and who volunteered to be interviewed. Qualitative interview questions related to the international students' difficulties adapting or transitioning to American social and academic culture, their perceptions of their own changes and external social and learning environment changes, and their difficulties, if any, in adapting to life in America.

To explore the degree to which international students have culturally transited in an increasingly globalized U.S. society, the research design consisted of three stages:

- a. First: the researcher collected factors of globalization relevant to international students' academic and sociocultural adaptation. The purpose of this stage was to, through a quantitative study, explore the impact of changes driven by globalization on international students.
- b. Second: the collected quantitative data was used to examine hypothesized differences between the adaptation and/or experiences of international students

with larger or smaller support groups, and international students with different majors (sciences or humanities). Increased global migration, which has led to a significant increase in the populations of international students at U.S. universities (IIE, 2008), could have influenced the sociocultural adaption of international students. Furthermore, it was hypothesized that differences in academic culture in different fields of study might affect the adaptation of different groups of international students.

c. To further explore the experiences of international students attempting to transition their life and learning in a globalized U.S. university culture, a qualitative study was conducted, using transformative learning theories as a basis for interpretation.

The purpose of the qualitative research in this study was to try to find answers that might help explain the quantitative results which did not provide enough supportive evidence for the research questions. The qualitative portion also examined whether the international students had changed their own cultural values after learning and living in the U.S. In this study, the quantitative research had a focus on international students' adaptation to American academic and social cultures; but, the quantitative results could not specifically measure and realize the participants' transitional experiences of living and learning in American universities. In line with adult learning theories (Mezirow, 1991; Kegan, 1994), adult learners may experience a change of perspectives when coping with a new lifestyle, new cultural values, or a different learning context and learning style in a new society. Adult learners from other countries, in terms of transformative learning

theories, might have to adjust or change their own ways of learning and living to adapt to social life as well as achieve to their academic goals in American universities.

Data

The international students participating in this study were from 62 different countries and were all actively enrolled (2009-2010 academic year) at a 4-year university in the southeastern United States. Three hundred and six international students were available to participate in this study. This study used a survey instrument, the International Student Transition Survey (ISTS), as well as qualitative interview questions, to gather data about international students' social and academic transition to life in the U.S. One part of the instrument consisted of 88 questions designed to measure five independent variables (Comfort with Oral English, Interaction, Motivation, Online-Support, and Perception of Instructors) and two dependent variables (Socio-cultural Adaptation, and Academic Adaptation). The other part included interview questions (Appendix D) designed to learn international students' actual experiences of transition in the U.S.

Research Questions

This study investigated three quantitative research questions:

Research Question 1: Do the five Independent Variables (Comfort with Oral English, Interaction, Motivation, Online-Support, and Perception of Instructors) have a significant impact on the adaptation of international students to American social culture and academic culture?

Research Question 2: Does the size of international students' co-national support group affect their adaptation to American social culture and academic culture?

Research Question 3: Does international students' field of study affect their adaptation to American social culture and academic culture?

Additionally, this study investigated two qualitative research questions:

- Question 1: What changes have international students undergone in order to make a successful transition to the U.S. culture?
- Question 2: How have international students been changed by the experience of living and learning in the United States?

Hypotheses

- Hypothesis 1: There is statistically significant relationship between each of the five independent variables and international students' academic adaptation.
- Hypothesis 2: There is statistically significant relationship between each of the five independent variables and international students' sociocultural adaptation.
- Hypothesis 3: There is a statistically significant difference between the academic adaptation of international students with larger co-national support groups and international students with smaller co-national support groups.
- Hypothesis 4: There is a statistically significant difference between the sociocultural adaptation of international students in the sciences and international students in the humanities.

Population and Sample

Population

The sample population for this study was drawn from the 305 international students actively enrolled in undergraduate and graduate programs at a 4-year university in the southeastern United States during the 2009 - 2010 academic year. The students

represented 62 countries. Demographically, 85 students were from India, 42 were from China, 20 were from Brazil, 11 were from Nepal, 10 were from Canada, nine were from the U.K., eight were from France, eight were from South Korea, seven were from Columbia, and seven were from Germany. The remaining 99 students come from 52 other countries. All of the international students' demographic information was legally available through the International Student and Scholarship Service (ISSS) at the university.

Sample Size

The goal for this project was to collect at least 90 responses from the available sample population of 305 international students. A total of 16 international students volunteered to participate in the qualitative portion of this study.

Sample Selection

This study utilized a survey instrument, the ISTS, which is an 80-item questionnaire. The instrument was digitally implemented through the Survey Monkey website. Additionally, the researcher utilized convenience and snowball methods to recruit participants. Students who participated in the survey were asked if they were willing to participate in qualitative interviews.

International students' email addresses were available through the university's International Student and Scholarship Service (ISSS); therefore, subjects received an email message (Appendix B) asking if they would participate in this study. The participants were able to either respond to the survey questions via a Survey Monkey link in the email, or they could request a printed questionnaire from the researcher (Appendix C). After the data collection of survey questions for this study, a qualitative study was

conducted. Sixteen international students who had already completed the survey questions volunteered to participate in the qualitative interview.

Instrumentation

The instrument created for this study, the International Students Transition Survey (ISTS) was composed questions drawn from 9 scales from six previous studies on international students' academic and cultural adaptation (Cemalcilar, Falbo, & Stapleton, 2005; Chirkov et al., 2007; Lee, 2007; Mullen & Tallent-Runnels, 2006; Ward & Kennedy, 1999; Ye, 2006). Because all the items in the ISTS were drawn from studies on international students' adaptation, the ISTS had high validity. Furthermore, the majority of the sections on the ISTS were verified to have high reliability. The author received permission from each of the previous authors to utilize their scales in the creation of the ISTS.

International Student Transition Survey (ISTS)

This study used a survey instrument, the International Student Transition Survey (ISTS), which consists of 80 questions designed to measure five independent variables (Comfort with Oral English, Interaction, Motivation, Online-Support, and Perception of Instructors) and two dependent variables (Socio-cultural Adaptation, and Academic Adaptation) (see Appendix C). These variables were derived through a study of the existing related literature. The instrument consisted of seven sections of questions, each of which is designed to measure one of the study variables. The seven sections were drawn from six previous studies of international student adaptation, with each section coming from one of the previous studies. The sections were chosen because they had been proven to have particularly high validity and reliability. Several of the questions

were modified in minor ways in order to adjust the grammar for the context of the current research. For example, the question, “Attend public meetings and private parties at which mainly co-nationals are present.” was changed to read, “I attend public meetings and private parties where most of the people are from my native country.” Similarly, the language of some items was modified to be more specific for purposes of clarity. As an example, the question, “They provide me with information I need.” was modified to read, “I get information I need from online websites or from interactions with individuals online.”

Section One consists of nine questions, and was designed to measure international students’ Motivation (the student’s motivation to travel and study abroad). The questions in Section One were drawn from two instruments used by Chirkov et al. in a 2007 study titled: *The Role of Self-Determined Motivation and Goals for Study Abroad in the Adaptation of International Students*. Four questions describing international students’ ‘Self-Development Factor’ ($\alpha = .66$), or their educational and career goals for studying abroad, were drawn from the *Goals for Study Abroad Questionnaire* (Chirkov et al., 2007). Five items describing international students’ Identified Regulation ($\alpha = .81$), were drawn from the *Self Regulation Questionnaire—Study Abroad* (SRQ—SA) instrument (Chirkov et al., 2007). Identified regulation reflects the international students’ commitment to studying abroad on a personal level.

Section Two consists of 10 questions designed to measure international students’ Interaction (the frequency and type of social interaction the students have with American citizens). The questions in Section Two were drawn from the survey instrument designed

by Ye for a 2006 study titled: *Traditional and Online Support Networks in the Cross-Cultural Adaptation of Chinese International Students in the United States* ($\alpha = .89$).

Section Three consists of 14 questions designed to measure international students' Online-Support (the student's access to social supports through the internet). The questions in Section Three were also drawn from Ye's 2006 instrument, from the section investigating international students' online support ($\alpha = .86$).

Section Four consists of seven questions designed to measure international students' Comfort with Oral English (the student's skill and confidence with oral English communication). The questions in Section Four were drawn from the survey instrument designed by Lee for a 2007 study titled: *Linguistic and Cultural Factors in East Asian Students' Oral Participation in U.S. University Classrooms*. Seven questions were drawn from a scale measuring the international students' English speaking anxiety ($\alpha = .84$).

Section Five consists of 12 questions designed to measure international students' Perception of Instructors (the student's perception of the American classroom environment). The questions in Section Five were drawn from a survey instrument designed by Mullen & Tallent-Runnels for a 2006 study titled: *Student Outcomes and Perceptions of Instructors' Demands and Support in Online and Traditional Classrooms*. Six questions were drawn from a scale measuring the international students' perception of the Academic Support offered by their instructors ($\alpha = .83$). The remaining six questions were drawn from a scale measuring the international students' perception of the Affective Support offered by their instructors ($\alpha = .89$).

Section Six consists of 20 questions designed to measure international students' Socio-Cultural Adaptation to life in the U.S. The questions are drawn from a Ward and

Kennedy's 1999 study titled: *The Measurement of Sociocultural Adaptation*. The items used in Section Six of the current study are the 20 determined by Ward and Kennedy to have high reliability ($\alpha \geq .70$).

Section Seven consists of eight questions designed to measure international students' Academic Adaptation, or their transition to life in American universities. The questions were drawn from Cemalcilar, Falbo, and Stapleton's 2005 study titled: *Cyber Communication: A New Opportunity for International Students' Adaptation?* The questions were drawn from their Academic Adaptation Scale ($\alpha = .82$).

Interview questions were developed for the qualitative portion of this study (Appendix D).

Variables

In accordance with the studies reviewed, five major independent variables were selected as those shown to distinctively affect international students' academic and cultural transition in American universities: (a) Comfort with Oral English (the student's skill and confidence with oral English communication), (b) Interaction (the frequency and type of social interaction the student has with American citizens), (c) Motivation (the student's motivation to travel and study abroad), (d) Online-Support (the student's access to social supports through the internet), and (e) Perception of Instructors (the student's perception of the American classroom environment). The dependent variables are: (a) Socio-Cultural Adaptation, and (b) Academic Adaptation. The authors' permission to use the items in their studies showed in Appendix E.

Data Collection Procedures

Once permission to conduct the study was obtained from the Institutional Review Board (Appendix A), data collection began. The ISTS Survey instrument used in the study is an 80-question questionnaire. The instrument was digitally implemented through the Survey Monkey website. Subjects were asked to participate through their email, which was available through the University's International Student and Scholarship Service (ISSS). Additionally, the researcher utilized convenience and snowball methods to recruit participants.

Step 1

The researcher acquired legal agreement from the university ISSS for access to all of the international students' e-mail addresses. Following this, emails were sent to all the international students at the university, soliciting participation in the study. A link to the instrument (ISTS) implementation on Survey Monkey was included in the email. Additionally, hard-copies of the survey were distributed by convenience and snowball methods.

Step 2

The data collection period lasted two weeks, starting when the survey instrument (ISTS) was made available through Survey Monkey. Additionally, during this period, hard-copies of the survey were distributed and retrieved.

Step 3

After data collection was completed, Multivariate Multiple Linear Regression analysis and Independent Sample *t*-Tests were performed using statistical analysis software (SPSS, version 17).

The researcher interviewed 16 respondents, after obtaining these respondents' agreement through emailing a consent form to these respondents or asking them in person because of personal acquaintance. A digital voice recorder and the internet voice recorder were used during the process of interview. Each interview lasted from 30 to 45 minutes. It took approximately one and a half months to complete these 16 interviews. After finishing recording each interview, the content of all the interviews was transcribed for data analysis.

Data Analysis Procedures

Quantitative Data Analysis

After data collection, statistical analysis software (SPSS, version 17) was utilized to determine whether or not there is a statistically significant relationship between each of the five independent variables (Comfort with Oral English, Interaction, Motivation, Online-Support, and Perception of Instructors) and international students' academic and cultural transition (Socio-Cultural Adaptation, and Academic Adaptation). A Multiple Regression analysis was performed, along with Independent Simple *t*-tests. Essentially, this portion of the research examined the extent to which the five independent variables have affected international students' adaptation in learning and life in America. It was hypothesized by the researcher that the influence of globalization will be apparent through high levels of Comfort with Oral English, Interaction, Online-Support, and Perception of Instructors. It was further hypothesized that international students with access to larger and more varied support communities would have less difficulty transforming and adapting to American society and academic society. Lastly, it was

hypothesized that international students with majors in science might have less difficulty with transition by virtue of avoiding to a large extent exposure to American culture.

Qualitative Data Analysis

To depict the essence or basic structure of experience is a phenomenologist's task (Merriam, 2009). This study adopted transcendental or psychological phenomenology (Creswell, 2007; Moustakas, 1994) to analyze a current phenomenon that international students' transitions in the U.S. This phenomenological analysis method focuses on a description of the experiences of participants with bracketing out the researcher's own experiences with the phenomenon. In this study, the research had tried to objectively demonstrate and describe the international student participants' experiences of transition in a globalized learning context, in terms of these participants' actual experiences.

In terms of the interviewees' transcripts, the researcher processed analyzing the data (interviewees' experience in adaptation to American culture). The procedure of Phenomenological analysis followed Moustakas's (1994) five steps, which is further explained by Creswell (2007). After identifying a phenomenon in regard to international students' transitions being influenced by globalization, the research took a refresh view to deal with the participants' experiences. Then the research collected data from 16 volunteered international students who have experienced the phenomenon. As analyzing the data, this study also considered and applied Merriam's (2009) specific steps to categorize data, sort categories, name the categories, and theoretically connect the whole categories into themes. At last, the research developed the description of what the participants experienced and how they experienced it in terms of their conditions, situations, or context. The result of analysis was conveyed the overall essence of these

international students' experiences. The findings were generalized to several major themes.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

Introduction

This study examined international students' experiences adapting to academic learning and sociocultural life in an American university. A particular goal of the study was to make this investigation in light of the effects of globalization which are hypothesized to have mediated international students' transition experience. This study has also investigated international students' cultural values, in order to determine whether international students transformed their cultural values after transitioning to life and learning in American society.

This study involved both quantitative and qualitative analyses. The quantitative component utilized data collected through the International Student Transition Survey (ISTS) (Appendix B), which consisted of 80 questions divided into seven sections. The ISTS data were analyzed using Multiple Regression and Independent t-Test. The quantitative research tested the four hypotheses examining international students' adaptations to American culture in learning and life, as well as their differences based on group size and field of study.

The qualitative component of this research utilized a phenomenological research methodology (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007; Creswell, 2007) to analyze interviews. The interviews were conducted to further explore the extent to which the participating international students had transformed their ways of living or ways of learning because of their intercultural experiences in an American university. Out of the 115 total participants in this study, sixteen volunteered to participate in interviews. Seven to ten interview

questions were asked to explore the experience of transformation experienced by the respondents during their learning and life in the U.S. (Appendix C). The interview questions were also designed to explore whether the respondents had felt the influence of globalization or had experienced any changes in their original cultural values.

Quantitative Data

International students who were invited to participate in this study were enrolled in the study university during the 2009 and 2010 academic years. Of the 305 international students invited, 120 returned survey questionnaires, yielding a 39% return rate. Five responses were deleted because more than half (40) of the total items (80) had been left blank, which left 115 valid responses. These 115 international students came from 32 countries (one respondent wrote “Asia” as his or her country of origin). The respondents completing all 80 questions (100%) of the ISTS came from China (31), India (20), Brazil (14), France (five), South Korea (four), Venezuela (four), Japan (three), Nepal (three), Taiwan (three), Thailand (three), Canada (two), Russia (two), and from other countries with only one participant (20). Based on continents, 59.2% of the respondents were from Asia, 21.1% were from Central and South America, and the remaining 19.7% were from other continents.

Table 1 contains respondent demographic information. The majority of the respondents were between 22 and 29 years old, and, in terms of gender, almost as many males responded as females. In terms of field of study, nearly twice as many respondents came from science fields (the Colleges of Health and the Colleges of Science and Technology) as opposed to the humanities fields (Colleges of Arts and Letters, Business, and Education and Psychology). The majority of respondents were graduate students and

had formally studied English for an average of 11.86 years; in addition participants had been in the U.S. around three years ($M = 2.95$).

Table 3

Participant Demographic Information

Data		<i>n</i>	%
Age	18-22	14	12.2
	23-29	71	61.7
	30-39	28	24.3
	40-49	2	1.7
Gender	Male	54	47.0
	Female	60	52.2
Field of Study	Science	74	64.3
	Humanities	41	35.7
Degree Level	Bachelor	19	16.5
	Master	44	38.3
	Doctorate	52	45.2
Continent	Asia	69	59.2
	Central & South America	26	21.1
	Others	20	19.7

Data Analysis

The ISTS was tested for reliability (in Chapter III). The variables were re-tested in this study and maintained high reliability. Table 2 contains the variables; the numbers of the associated questions, and the final Cronbach's Alpha values, which all indicated high

reliability. Before analyzing, several items were reverse coded. To improve reliability, several items were deleted; these are listed in Table 2. The variable of Comfort of Oral English had seven items that were reverse coded. Perception of Instructor with 12 items had four items reversed (question 41, 42, 43, and 45). Sociocultural Adaptation included 20 items and all 20 items were reversed coded.

Table 4

Reliability of Study Variables

Variables	Questions	Deleted Items (D) Reverse Items (R)	Cronbach's Alpha (α) after deletion
Motivation	1-9		.78
Interaction	10-19	12 (D)	.70
Online support	20-33		.92
Comfort with oral English	34-40	34-40 (R)	.91
Perception of instructor	41-52	41, 42, 43, 45 (R)	.81
Sociocultural adaptation	53-72	53-72 (R)	.86
Academic adaptation	73-80		.86

Table 3 contains the means and standard deviations of the five independent variables and the outcome variables. Each variable scale consisted of 5-point Likert-type questions in which a response of 1 indicated a very negative perception and 5 indicated a very positive perception. For all variables except online support, the mean response was

positive (> 3). For two variables, Academic Adaptation and Perception of Instructors, the mean response was close to 4. For Sociocultural Adaptation, Motivation, Interaction, and Comfort with Oral English, the mean response was only slightly above neutral, while for Online Support, the mean response was very close to neutral, but slightly negative.

In terms of the results shown in Table 5, most respondents presented positive evaluation in their motivation of studying abroad, social interaction with other students, comfort of spoken English, perception of American professors, adaptation in learning, and adaptation in social culture. However, the respondents presented slightly negative evaluation in the social network support through the internet.

Table 5

Descriptive Statistics

Variable	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Motivation	3.33	.77
Interaction	3.52	.63
Comfort with oral English	3.39	1.02
Online support	2.80	.88
Perception of Instructor	3.63	.57
Academic adaptation	3.87	.71
Sociocultural adaptation	3.48	.56

Note. Scale 1= negative, Scale 5 = positive, N = 115

Quantitative Analysis

Multivariate Multiple Linear Regression and Independent-sample t Test were used to examine the data. First, two multiple regression analyses were conducted to predict the relationship between five predictor variables (Motivation, Interaction, Comfort with Oral English, Perception of Instructor, and Online Support) and the two outcome variables, international students' Academic Adaptation and Sociocultural Adaptation. One analysis used Academic Adaptation as an outcome variable measured by the five predictor variables (Hypothesis 1). The other analysis used Sociocultural Adaptation as an outcome variable measured by the same five predictors (Hypothesis 2). The results are as follows:

Hypothesis 1: There is statistically significant relationship between each of the five independent variables and international students' academic transition.

A Multiple Regression analysis was performed to test the hypothesis. The result indicated a significant relationship between the five independent variables and Academic Adaptation ($F(5, 109) = 4.58, p = .001$) and this research model explained 17% of variance in between the variables ($R^2 = .17$). The Perception of Instructor variable revealed a greater significant relationship with Academic Adaptation variable ($p < .001$). The multiple regression results suggest that international students' motivation, interaction with friends, perception of instructors, comfort with oral English, and online support are related to their academic adaptation in the American university. Particularly, the respondents' Perception of Instructor indicated a stronger correlation with their Academic Adaptation. The respondents' Motivation negatively correlated with their Academic Adaptation (see Table 6).

Table 6

The Multiple Regression Result for the Five Predictors and Academic Adaptation

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients <i>B</i>	Standardized Coefficients β	Sig.
Perception of instructor	.44	.35	< .001
Comfort with oral English	.09	.13	.18
Motivation	-.12	-.13	.14
Online support	.12	.08	.11
Interaction	.06	.05	.60

The significant correlation between the respondents' perception of instructors and their adaptation to American higher educational environment indicated that the better evaluation the respondents have given to their professors, the easier academic adaptation the respondents might have had. In terms of the set of data in Perception of Instructor, most respondents "Always" agreed American professors' instruction and support in learning, including instructional strategy, assigning work, feedback, classroom discussion, personal experience providence, and humor. Because of the satisfaction with American professors' instruction, the respondents might be confident with their study and dealing with challenges in the American higher educational environment.

Hypothesis 2: There is statistically significant relationship between each of the five independent variables and international students' sociocultural adaptation.

The results of a Multiple Regression analysis indicated a significant relationship between all independent variables and Sociocultural Adaptation ($F(5, 109) = 6.94, p < .001$), with 24% of variance between the variables ($R^2 = .24$) explained by the research model. Comfort with Oral English ($p = .001$) and Perception of Instructor ($p = .011$) were both shown to be significantly related to Sociocultural Adaptation. The multiple regression results suggest that international students' motivation, interaction with friends, perception of instructors, comfort with oral English, and online support are significantly associated with their sociocultural adaptation in the American university. The respondents' comfort with oral English and perception of instructor indicated a stronger correlation with the respondents' adaptation in the academic context. The online support for the respondents' sociocultural adaptation demonstrated negative correlation (Table 7).

Table 7

The Multiple Regression Result for the Five Predictors and Sociocultural Adaptation

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients <i>B</i>	Standardized Coefficients β	<i>Sig.</i>
Comfort with oral English	.17	.31	< .001
Perception of instructor	.23	.23	.01
Motivation	.06	.09	.32
Online support	-.10	-.15	.11
Interaction	.00	.00	.10

Language communication is a critical component of individual's sociocultural experience. Through language communication, people in a new social environment may be able to build social relationship, express their needs and difficulties, and obtain necessary help to adapt to a new society in learning or living. The respondents' expression of oral English was positively correlated with adaptation to American culture ($p = .001$). The result in this model indicated that the more comfort the respondents could feel when they spoke English, the less difficulties they would experience in American sociocultural life. The other variable showing a significant correlation with international students' sociocultural adaptation in the U.S. was their perception of their U.S. instructors ($p = .01$). The academic environment is shaped by cultural contexts. Communication in class, learning styles and teaching strategies in American higher educational institutions may be different from those of other countries. American professors teach and manage classes for international students, as well as for American students. However, since American students are the majority, U.S. professors plan their lessons, their teaching style, the activities and interactions according to American conventions. For this reason, international students must adapt to an educational environment that differs from their expectations, sometimes in ways that elicit distress or discomfort. Therefore, to a large extent international students' need to cope with learning in American universities is a product of their experiences with American professors' strategies for teaching classroom interaction. This is not necessarily a bad thing. In this study, the respondents perceived their American professors with a high evaluation of their professors' teaching, curriculum, classroom interaction and grading standard. Whether the classes that the respondents had were online or face-to-face, they felt confident with their professors' instruction, and they

would be able to adjust their learning styles and cultural perspectives to American ways of studying.

Hypothesis 3: There is a statistically significant difference between international students with larger co-national support groups and international students with smaller co-national support groups in their academic and sociocultural

adaptation. Independent-sample *t* tests was conducted to evaluate the hypothesis (H₃) that international students might have better academic adaptation and sociocultural adaptation when international students are from larger co-national support groups (Brazilian, Chinese, and Indian international students in this study) as compared to the international students with smaller co-national support groups (the other international students in this study). The test regarding international students' academic adaptation was not significant, ($t [113] = -.51, p = .61$); the results were counter to the research hypothesis. International students with a larger co-national support groups ($M = 3.90, SD = .66$) on the average had similar academic adaptation to those with a smaller co-national support groups ($M = 3.82, SD = .76$). The 95% confidence interval for the difference in means was close, ranging from $-.33$ to $.20$. The other test regarding international students' sociocultural adaptation was not significant, ($t [113] = 1.96, p = .052$), but the results were also counter to the research hypothesis. International students with a larger co-national support groups ($M = 3.40, SD = .57$) on the average had similar sociocultural adaptation to those with a smaller co-national support groups ($M = 3.60, SD = .55$). The 95% confidence interval for the difference in means was close, ranging from $-.002$ to $.41$. The results suggest that international students' academic adaptation and sociocultural

adaptation were not accounted for by the size of international students' co-national support groups.

Hypothesis 4: There is a statistically significant difference between international students in the sciences and international students in the humanities in their academic and sociocultural adaptation. Independent-sample t tests was performed to examine the hypothesis (H4) that whether there was a statistically significant difference on the international students' academic adaptation and sociocultural adaptation in the American university, when they are in, science fields (Science & Technology Colleges and Health College) as compared to the humanities fields (Art and Letter College, Business College, and Education & Psychology College). The test regarding international students' academic adaptation was not significant, ($t [113] = -1.46$, $p = .15$), therefore the results were counter to the research hypothesis. International students majoring in science ($M = 3.93$, $SD = .70$) on the average had similar adaptation in academic context to those majoring in the humanities ($M = 3.73$, $SD = .76$). The 95% confidence interval for the difference in means, ranged from $-.47$ to $.07$. The other test regarding international students' sociocultural adaptation was not significant, ($t [113] = .65$, $p = .520$), therefore the results were also counter to the research hypothesis. International students in science ($M = 3.46$, $SD = .56$) on the average had similar adaptation of sociocultural environment to those in the humanities ($M = 3.53$, $SD = .58$). The 95% confidence interval for the difference in means was close, ranging from $-.15$ to $.28$. The results suggest that international students' academic adaptation and sociocultural adaptation were not related to international students' majors sorted by science and humanities fields.

Qualitative Study

Qualitative Data

Sixteen international students volunteered to participate in qualitative interviews. These volunteer interviewees came from 12 countries: China (four), Brazil (two), Taiwan (one), the Philippines (one), Japan (one), South Korea (one), Thailand (one), India (one), Hungary (one), Sri Lanka (one), France (one), and Ghana (one). All of the interviewed international students came from the southeastern U.S. university where the ISTS was deployed. However, the student from Sri Lanka had not participated in the qualitative portion of this study. The interviews consisted of two series of further questions (see Appendix C). To begin, participants were asked a series of general questions to check the extent to which they had enjoyed their learning and life in an American university. Following this, subjects were asked one of two separate series of questions, depending on their responses to the first set of questions. These two series were designed to further explore either the students (a) awareness of cultural differences, or (b) change of their original cultural values.

The interviewees included seven males and nine females. The age range of the interviewees was between 24 and 45 years old. Interviewees had studied in the present U.S. university for an average of 2.7 years. With the exception of four interviewees, one each from China, Brazil, Hungary, and France, all interviewees had studied in America for over three years.

Six of them studied in Masters Program and the other 10 studied in the Doctoral program. Seven of the interviewees majored in science fields (Math, Polymer Science, Biology), and the other eight majored in the humanities (Technology Education, English

Literature, Psychology, Music Performance, Public Relations, Language Teaching, Higher Education). Three of the respondents preferred to be interviewed in Chinese; therefore the researcher translated their content into English. These interviewees' brief personal information (using pseudonyms) is presented in Table 8.

Table 8

Interviewee Demographic Information

Pseudonym	Major	Gender F/M	Origin of Birth	Years of Study in the Univ.	Pursued Degree
Lenna	Music	F	Brazil	1	Master's
Gary	Music	M	Brazil	2	Master's
Yu	Math	F	China	5	Doctorate
Ko	Polymer science	F	China	3	Doctorate
Jade	Public relations	F	China	0.5	Master's
Ron	Technology education	M	China	1.5	Master's
Emi	Language teaching	F	France	1	Master's
Nabo	Higher education	M	Ghana	3	Doctorate
Alex	Psychology	M	Hungary	1	Doctorate
Mola	Polymer science	M	India	4	Doctorate
Taro	Polymer science	M	Japan	3	Doctorate
Jeck	Polymer science	M	Philippines	4	Doctorate
Suna	English	F	South Korea	3	Doctorate
Taran	Biology	F	Sri Lanka	3	Doctorate
Yeng	Psychology	F	Taiwan	3	Doctorate
Judy	Public relations	F	Thailand	2	Master's

Qualitative Data Analysis

The purpose of the qualitative component of this study was to explore whether the international students have changed their own cultural values after learning and living in the U.S. In this study, the quantitative research had a focus on international students' adaptation to American academic and social cultures; but, the quantitative results could not specifically measure and realize the participants' transitional experiences of living and learning in American universities. In line with transformative learning theories (Kegan, 1994; Mezirow, 1991), adult learners may experience the change of perspectives when coping with a new lifestyle, new cultural values, or a different learning context and learning style in a new society. The adult learners from other countries, in terms of transformative learning theories, might have to adjust or change their own ways of learning and living to adapt the social life as well as achieve their academic goals in American universities.

With the awareness of globalizing relationships within worldwide nations, homogenization of cultures is strikingly increasing through business, and advances in the internet and intercultural communication (Finger, 2005; Merriam, Caffarella, & Baumgartner, 2007; Merriam & Young, 2008). It can, therefore, be assumed that international students' currently learning and living in America might have experiences varying from those predicted from past studies of international students' transformative learning. This was one of the considerations guiding this qualitative expansion to the current study.

Sixteen international students were interviewed. Audio recordings of their responses were transcribed, analyzed, and coded. The interviewees' responses to the

qualitative questions were sorted into three categories: Globalization and Adaptation, Adaptation and Culture, Adaptation and Transition. These three categories based on the transcripts were analyzed and accounted for as follows:

Globalized and Adaptation

In this study, Globalized Adaptation describes international students' perceptions of American culture since they planned to study in America, and the subjective and objective factors that may have shaped international students' perspectives of adaptation to a new world. After analysis of the participants' responses, Globalized Adaptation falls into three subtopics: Americanization, Educational Expectation, and Technology. These three subtopics help illuminate international students' current perceptions of American culture and how their own expectations and technology use have influenced their adaptation to living and learning in America.

Americanization. The participants, basically, agreed that there were not many surprises when they arrived and lived in the U.S. For example, Jeck, from The Philippines, described his experience, "my country is very westernized. It is basically like the American culture. Our language is English . . . Food-wise they are very American. Clothes and shoes are similar." Mola, brought his perception of American from India: "American movies and TV are popular in India. India has a lot of communications with America. All of the software companies are from America . . . Anything from America is already in India." Jeck and Mola had no difficulties to adapt their daily life in America. Gary, from Brazil, also expressed that he was similarly exposed to American culture in his own country. Gary stated "we have many things from America in our culture and that helped me to not be shocked or surprised when I got here." A Chinese student, Ko, was

able to very specifically describe her experience with American culture: “I don’t have much so-called culture shock in America; I definitely believe ‘globalization’ plays a very critical role in providing a lot of information about America. I don’t have much trouble surviving here because I know this country.” Globalization has made the cultures of the world less divergent from each other in a variety of respects; however, for the international students studying in the U.S., it has provided important information related to America for these participants, and lessened their difficulty surviving in the U.S.

Educational expectation. International students’ expectations for academic achievement and quality of life determined how well they can adapt in American social contexts. In the quantitative portion of this study, participants’ major motivation to travel far from their home countries, to study in the U.S., was to pursue better educational opportunities, followed by opportunities for better employment. This result was consistent with the perceptions expressed by the respondents in the qualitative portion of this study. For example, Mola, a student from India, reported that he made a good choice in deciding to study in America:

In India there are a lot of restrictions in education. A lot of Indians are in Polymer Science [here]. This is an excellent school. I had other options, but I decided to come here. I have close friends who are from China also.

While the quantitative portion of this study showed that most participants chose to study in the U.S. in order to pursue a better education, rather than for other personal life goals, American education still presented them with challenges. The qualitative respondents reported that, because they came from different cultures, their previous learning experiences differed from American students’. Different learning styles and

learning contexts in America provided international students new thoughts, feeling and learning experiences. These experiences simultaneously challenged international students' established ways of learning from their own cultures.

The interviewees participating in this study expressed their adaptation to the challenges in learning as well as the reason why they still valued the opportunities of learning at American universities. By necessity, the interviewees adapted to meet several English speaking challenges related to culture differences; difficult issues included classroom discussions, individual independent learning, student-centered teaching styles and competitiveness. In addition, almost all interviewees expressed that their learning experiences in the U.S. would bring them the higher social recognition in their own countries.

English speaking. Qualitative participants from Asian countries, reported more difficulty with speaking and learning in English than non-Asian students. Yeng stated: "I really cared about how well my spoken English was because I believed people around me would be always watching me and evaluating my English. That made me more nervous and anxious about my English." However, after adapting over two years, Yeng found a way to face her difficulties:

I found I need to accept the truth that it was very difficult for a foreign student like me to be competent with English in an academic environment. Speak out your own ideas or opinions and don't care much about how valuable your ideas or opinions are, really impressed me. This truth made me feel better and more confident to express myself.

Oral presentation was another challenge in speaking for the interviewees. Oral presentation was more than a required assignment or a test on individual's English communication ability. It was a necessary academic training. Even though oral presentation scared Ko, she still valued her experiences:

Oral presentation always makes my legs shake. Honestly, it is hard for Chinese students, but it is necessary and useful. You need to fully understand what you read, be clear about every step of your experiment, and report the results in "clear" English. This process not only helps students understand what they have learned, but also trains students to organize their thinking and expression. I highly value it.

Although comfort with oral English may be an issue for most Asian students, non-Asian students seemed to have greater comfort speaking English. A Brazilian student, Lenna, reported, regarding her English learning experience in the American university:

I learned English by myself. I was lucky because my Voice and Cello teachers were Spanish language. They asked if I would like for them to speak Spanish to me, I said, "Speak English." That made it easier to learn. It took about 3 months to start speaking. I am not shy. I speak in class and just tell them it is not my native language.

Lenna faced the difficulties of learning language easily because she knew what she expected to learn in the American university.

Classroom discussion. Discussion in American classrooms is a typical way of teaching and learning, as well as a part of students' grades. Classroom discussion was unusual and hard for Asian students; in contrast, non-Asian students seemed used to commenting or

expressing themselves in class. The international students come from different Asian countries; however, their learning styles appear similar. In general, Asian international students are not used to asking teachers direct questions during class; their habit is instead to keep 'respectfully' quiet and not to distract or bother the teacher during their work. In other words, classroom discussion is not a learning style that Asian students are used to practicing and may have caused tension and anxiety for Asian students.

Asian students majoring in the humanities particularly struggled with their lesser degree of comfort with oral English and their habit of keeping quiet in class. For example, Jade found that, although she thought she had made the correct decision, in coming to the U.S. to study, she still had a hard time in classroom discussions. She stated:

I changed my major. I got my BA in Accounting [in China], but now I changed to Public Relations as my major of master program. I like the program in this school. However, I am not very satisfied with my academic performance, even though I got straight "A"s for my first term. I am usually quiet in class unless the teacher asks me questions. I guess my classmates in my master's program didn't like to talk to me. The major reason for that was my English was not good enough to communicate with them.

Another Asian student, Jeck, a science major, regarded speaking in class or in a group meeting as a necessary skill in learning:

I am a bit shy in a group meeting. That does not work in America. People will think you don't know anything or are bored. I have started to participate more. I am not that shy any more. I am required to participate here. If you want people to

notice you and show you are thinking, you must speak, in class and group meetings.

In this study, non-Asian international students did not experience the same difficulties with classroom discussions as the Asian international students. This falls in line with previous studies results (Purci & Hu, 1995) which showed that non-Asian international students often had similar learning styles to American students. Though non-Asian students had less difficulty in classroom discussions, they shared the opinion of Asian international students that the American system of education was beneficial. Emi made a comparison between French and American higher education:

I am in the master's program here. I don't feel much stress here. There is homework throughout the semester so you know you are ready. In France you don't have a grade until the final test, so you have more pressure. Here you have several grades that count toward the final grade. In France if you fail the test you fail the course. [In France] we are free to talk in class. [In French classes] we usually don't talk to the professor, but if you have a question you can ask in class. [In France] it is usually the same two or three who raise their hands and talk in class.

Individual independent learning. Interviewees in this study mentioned that their experiences in American education trained them to learn and live more independently than they were accustomed to in their native countries. The interviewees thought that they could learn better in America, in comparison to pursuing higher education in their own countries. For example, Yeng, from Taiwan, thought learning in the American way had helped her learning to be more effective:

The learning experiences here are very different from mine in Taiwan. When I was in my Master's program, my professors still kept the ways of teaching similar to my high school teachers' ways. Copying and copying is only way to do in class in my former program. Anyway, learning is very interesting here because you have to search many kinds of information that is relative to your study or assignment through the Internet or the library in terms of the requirements on professors' syllabi.

Becoming more independent and confident in both learning and living, Judy, from Thailand, valued American education ever since she had been an exchange student in an American high school:

Compared to most Thai young people at my age, I have become more independent than them. Most of [the] Thai young people still quite depend on their parents or family. American culture has affected me to overcome or take the risk by myself. I really got benefited by this cultural environment.

Student centered teaching style. The interviewees in this study were impressed with the student-centered teaching style in American higher education. Student-centered teaching was different for the interviewees who had grown up learning in a teacher-centered cultural context. The teacher's authority seems to determine the teacher-centered learning environment. Nabo, from Ghana, described his surprise at a student-centered classroom:

Being in the classroom is different from my country. In my culture the professor will stand there [in front of students] and impart the knowledge. Always the students have to do a lot of presenting in class here. The professor has authority

over you. They are very strict. If you sent an assignment in late this is a sign of disrespect. I have never handed in an assignment late.

Yu, from China, also felt the impact of transitioning to student-centered classrooms. She explained:

I felt uncomfortable in class when the teacher was interrupted by the student until I got used to it since it is the American style “learner centered” instead of “sage on the stage---teacher centered.” I also felt strange that the homework could be done by “team work.” It is also the American culture, the spirit of the team work.

Competitiveness. In this study, almost all of the interviewees have been aware of less competitiveness within academic context in the American university, compared to their experiences in their native cultures. Compared to the situation in their original countries, these interviewees felt that the competition was less intense between students in classes regarding the achievement of academic goals. The chance to learn in an environment that builds self confidence and contains less competitiveness might be a reason why international students would choose to study in America. Ko compared her learning experience between China and America:

There is very little competitiveness I can feel in my current learning environment.

American students are not very much engaged in their study and pursuits.

Whereas, for Chinese students, working hard and competing with other students is part of our life and nobody can get away from that. Try to imagine that we have grown up and filtered by many standard placement tests in constantly competitive educational environments, we have been very much used to studying hard, and naturally engaging in working hard for our educational goals.

Ko also expressed how she was satisfied with her current study environment: “Anyway, my classroom environment, basically, is nice and friendly, including professors and classmates.” In addition to less learning competitiveness in American universities, Emi, from France, explained that it was easier to apply for scholarships in American than in France: “In France it is very competitive, but here it is not like that. I know that I have an assistantship here. In France there are no scholarships based on test results, but it is based on your parent’s salary. [Only] if [someone’s] parents earn [little] money will [the school] pay for your studies.”

Social Evaluation. Over all, most of interviewees in this study expressed both positive expectations and positive evaluations of American higher education. They also knew that the fact that they studied in America would make people in and from their native countries treat them differently. Gary, from Brazil, explained that in his country the people respected those who were educated in America more than those educated in Brazil: “People think you will be much better in your knowledge area because you came to the U.S. They have this idea that anyone who has gone to the U.S. and studied there is more educated and has had better experiences than those who stayed at home.” Nabo, from Ghana, reported that the situation is similar in his country: “People will view me with more respect since I have been in America. That is true.” Mola explained that the people of his village were very proud because he obtained a scholarship to study in the U.S.: “Educational background there [in the U.S.] is quite good, so they [the villagers] give you respect. In my village my name was in the newspaper because I studied in the U.S.”

Technology. With advancements in technology, particularly the internet, the influence of American media and culture has spread around the world, thus Americanizing other

countries (Mendis, 2005). At the same time, America is becoming more globalized, as the number of immigrants, international students, international faculty, and international businesses increase in the U.S. The new customary broad internet use by the current generation of students, both American and international, is probably another major factor helping international students adapt to life and learning in American culture. For example, in living, use of the internet may be effective in decreasing international students' culture shock by exposing them to American culture and by letting them research American culture and issues they encounter in the U.S. Additionally, through the internet applications, websites, and programs (Skype, MSN, E-mail, Facebook, etc.) international students were able to reach family, friends, or other social networks easily. Jade, from China, felt less culture shock in America because she had easy access to information through websites and through the friends who were studying or had studied in the U.S.:

When I got here, I didn't have much surprise, actually. To some certain degree, there are not many physical differences in a modernized environment between big cities. I feel like that we may be all globalized by general America culture. Via mass media and the internet, people like me can learn American people's lifestyles and culture values. In addition, before I decided to study abroad, I had been in contact with my friends studying here. We talked and exchanged information about life and learning by Skype or MSN.

This support coming from their co-national social network helped international students release stress, such as homesickness. Lenna, from Brazil, found that she did not miss her family very much because she could talk to them everyday on Skype: "I am not lonely here, I Skype. I talk to my mother every day using Messenger, Facebook, and

Skype. I missed my family much more back in the beginning, but now I don't miss them so much because I can see them every day.” Ron, from China, talked about various websites which helped international students living in America:

There are divisions, like the Mississippi Division. It is a web forum. It is the authority for helping international students. They address issues like buying a car or knowing where the VIN Number is, or helping with an interview with a company. They will call the advisor a “boss” and will give advice about how to deal with the company if you are being fired.

Regarding learning in America, the internet also provides access to a wide range of academic information. Through a variety of sources, many international students have searched and successfully obtained information about the universities they were interested in and planned to apply to in the U.S., even before they arrived in the country. Access to this academic information, through the internet, seems likely to decrease international students' learning difficulties. For example, Yeng, from Taiwan, reported that internet sites and applications helped her with both her research and her school work:

Email can help my learning in both online and face-to-face class. Wikipedia, Free dictionary, Google search system and Google book provide a bunch of useful information in my learning. For example, you can get any kind of knowledge or the possible usage of vocabulary in many writing in varied fields through Wikipedia.

In some cases, access to the internet made up for deficiencies or problems encountered by international students in their education. For example, Ko, from China, complained about the limitations of the database at her college. She explained that she

was frustrated, but was able to find other ways to access the information she needed online:

Google Scholar is good, but the articles you need usually charge money.

Unfortunately, [our school's] database is very limited. I often have to get the paper I want through my friends' user name and passwords in other universities.

Ah, it is so frustrating.

With information transmission via the internet, international students' life and learning today has been very different from the experiences of earlier international students who had much less access to aid through technology while they studied in America. The internet provides international students considerable information by which they can make sense of common American culture, in order to adapt to life in the U.S. In addition, technology has also changed international students' learning style by providing new channels and new types of information, through the internet. International students' learning has now become far more independent and convenient.

Adaptation and Culture

While searching for information to understand the social culture in a country may have become much easier, direct, personal, face-to-face interaction with native people within that country may still be difficult for international students. While general knowledge about culture in a country may help international students cope with problems they encounter in their daily lives, interpersonal interaction between people of different cultures may still require each individual to make adjustments and allowances for the other person's culture and background. For this reason, international students in America might have to seriously evaluate whether or not they feel comfortable or want to attend

events such as local sports games, informal student parties, or family events (reunions, weddings, funerals) of American friends or associates.

Learning and life management. As mentioned above, international students' major purpose in studying in America is to pursue a better higher education and successfully obtain degrees. Therefore, academic achievement may frequently be the central concern for international students studying in the U.S. Considering this central purpose, any other learning or intercultural experiences on or off campus are less important for international students. In this study, most of the international students were from Asian countries, and similarly, most of the quantitative and qualitative respondents were from Asian countries. Many Asian international students, for whom English is a second language, usually spend a significant portion of their time reading and working on assignments. While studying diligently in this fashion may be a guarantee for these students, allowing them to achieve academic success, they sacrifice in exchange their opportunity to spend time socially with friends. Ron, from China, explained the difficulty he faced and the time he devoted to reading assignments:

Much of the time in an academic setting we have to do a lot of reading.

Sometimes when I read a sentence, or a whole chapter in a book, I don't get it because I have been too devoted to the language thing. Sometimes I will ask my classmates, "Have you read Ch. 10?" which is required for the class. They will say "I can spend the 3 hours before class and know what the professor is talking about." That bothers me, you know. I will take a week just to know what the words are then try to understand the ideas and they will just take 3 hours before class and understand it. Sometimes I feel it is just not fair.

Another Asian student, Suna, from Korea, explained that she seldom had time for her American friends, because of her responsibility to study: “Here you are dear to your friends even if you are studying hard and don’t have time to hang out.”

In their limited time available for interaction with friends, Asian international students, for whom English was a second language, usually choose to socialize with their co-national groups or other international students. This left Asian international students with even less time to interact with American people or to explore aspects of American culture.

Ko, from China, explained that she had successfully adapted to American life after three years, but not by interacting with Americans: “it is not hard to adapt to American life for me. I can go scuba-diving, camping, or anything Americans could do, with my Chinese friends to experience the life in America. This is the way I enjoy adapting and experiencing American life.” Taro, from Japan, had very few co-nationals on campus. However, he found that he still preferred to socialize with international students, rather than American students. He explained: “I don’t socialize with Americans. I feel more comfortable with other international students better than Americans. I used to go to the BSU (Baptist Student Union) every Thursday lunch. [The international students there] don’t drink. They play ping pong and have conversations.”

Cultural adjustment. In addition to objective factors, such as limited available time and comfort with interaction with co-nationals, subjective factors which influenced international students’ interaction with Americans might also contribute to international students’ own cultural adjustment. Strictly speaking, to maintain a friendly relationship between individuals from different cultures might not be excessively difficult; however,

to establish and maintain a close friendship with a friend from a different culture might not be very easy. Cultural differences might play a key role that resulting in unpleasant experiences for international students when interacting with Americans. Many interviewees in this study reported that it was not easy for them to make friends with Americans.

Gary, from Brazil, felt disappointed with what he perceived to be deception on the part of American students, regarding the level of trust and caring in their relationships. He was impressed by Americans' greetings, which he perceived to be passionate and caring. However, he was confused because he felt like American classmates who had been consistently friendly in greetings and small-talk, never acted like they cared about him in reality:

People seem to be intimate quickly, but that is not really true. People will ask intimate question [such as] 'How are your classes going, how do you feel about it?' [In my country,] these questions are only asked in the family or [between] very close friends. But Americans are very distant in reality. For example, we met in a class every day for a semester and at the end of the class I would have thought we would have a farewell party or a get together to celebrate the accomplishments of the class, but no. They say, "Well, see you." And they go away. So the intimacy I thought we had was not really real. In my country you would not show intimacy in the classroom unless you have intimacy outside the classroom. I don't really understand how you are supposed to be intimate with an American.

Ko, from China, found that most Asian international students found some American cultural customs and expectations to be very difficult to accept:

You need to think in the American way or join in their life, and you can probably understand more about their cultures or become their “friends.” But, I don’t think I can stand meeting a group of people in a “party,” standing, drinking and talking with the group of people I don’t even know, except one or two of them! I am not interested in football; I don’t like their silly social games, some games really relate to their cultures challenge your vocabulary, life events, or history about America, just makes me very frustrated and bored. So, what I mean is that it is impossible for me to make a “real American friend.” In fact, language may be a barrier, and culture is another barrier. The difficulty is that language and culture are tightly bound to each other.

Other international students also had difficulty adjusting to American culture. For example, Thran, from Sri Lanka, had a difficult time asking for help, because, in her culture people would actively volunteer to help, and no one would ever ask for assistance: “My husband used the bike to get the drivers license. It is far away. We knew we could get help from BSU, but we did not want to ask them. He drove to the drivers’ place 3 or 4 times, there were some problems. We cannot ask people, a stranger, to help us.” Thran and her husband suffered because they were culturally conditioned not to ask for assistance. However, they didn’t realize that no Americans would be aware of the tasks facing them, such as getting to the distant Department of Motor Vehicles office. Without knowledge of the tasks or difficulties facing Thran and her husband, no one could volunteer to assist them.

Comparison of cultural adaptation between Asian and Non-Asian students. The qualitative interviews revealed a number of differences in the cultural adaptation experiences of Asian international students and non-Asian international students. In particular, Asian international students and non-Asian international students tended to differ in regards to their perceptions of social interaction with Americans. These differences fall into three categories: (a) English Communication, (b) Cultural Values, and (c) Learning Styles.

English communication. Most Asian interviewees with English as the second language reported that English communication was still an issue that troubled them. These interviewees, who reported lower proficiency with their English communication, came from China, Taiwan, and Japan. Asian interviewees from India, Sri Lanka, and the Philippines did not report difficulties with English communication because English is their official language. Two Asian interviewees for whom English was a second language, one from Thailand and one from South Korea, reported that they were confident with their oral English communication because they had stayed in the U.S. for more than six years.

Asian interviewees in this study reported different levels of comfort with English communication. However, a crucial reason for encountering difficulties in English communication may be related to culture, due to language's tight association with culture (Ferman, 1987). Additionally, language proficiency is a subjective perspective, usually depending on the language users' personal judgment. For example, while Indian students tended to report high confidence with their oral English, both Americans and international students from other countries reported that Indian students' oral English was

difficult for them to understand. Language barriers, then, may signify difficulties with oral communication caused by cultural differences rather than only by lack of knowledge or ability. Asian cultures, particularly, are quite different from Western cultures; this directly affects Asian international students' English learning and communication (Purice & Hu, 1995). Ron, from China, reported experiences that illustrate this situation. Before coming to the U.S. Ron had studied English for over fifteen years, and had a reputation, in China, as a good English speaker. He reports:

I am the kind of person among the Chinese student group who can relatively speak good English. I am not trying to brag, but I have a degree in English and have participated in National English Speaking Contests and that gives me the confidence that I can speak English bravely.

However, Ron discovered, when interacting with Americans, that cultural background was very important for communication. He reported that Americans would use so many culturally significant expressions and phrases in their conversation that he frequently had difficulty in understanding or participating in conversations:

Language is something that manifests the culture. So if you are dealing with a word that only exists in the USA, like Make a Wish group, for handicapped or terminally ill children. They want to give them their wish or satisfy them before they die. I think it is a TV program. So when some of my American friends use that in a joke, I don't get the joke because I don't know those words. In that situation I will feel that I am separated from them, because I don't get it.

Overall, non-Asian international students in this study reported less difficulty in English communication with Americans, than Asian international students. Non-Asian

students, particularly from Europe or other countries with English as an official language, expressed more comfort and confidence with English communication in the U.S. As an example, Emi, from France, had studied English since she was 11 years old; she reported: “There is no problem with spoken English. I never had any problem expressing myself. I really fit in to the American culture. I can talk about any subject. Native Americans can hear that I am not from here, but internationals can’t.”

Cultural values. Differences in cultural values influenced international students’ social interactions with Americans. International students’ perceptions of American people or U.S. culture tended to lead to different reactions dependent on each student’s cultural values. In this study, international students from Asia tended to retain their original cultural values; whereas, non-Asian students tended to either criticize or appreciate American culture. Taro, from Japan, could be described as following the proverbial advice: “*While in Rome, do as the Romans do.*” However, while he made concessions to follow American customs, he consciously preferred and retained his original cultural values. He explained that visiting international students should: “Hug and shake hands, American people do. But it is not the Japanese way. We don’t hug. We never hug. Maybe with a close girl friend. I hug several times here, but it is not my habit.” Ironically, Lenna, from Brazil, argued that American people were too subdued with their emotions:

We are more open in Brazil. We kiss and hug, we call our professors by first name. We feel very close to everybody. It feels like at home, like a big family everywhere. It is not like that here. There it is like a big family. Here if I don’t know you I won’t be so close. There if you are sad, you show that. People will

comfort you. Here, if you are sad when you are outside of your house you are always smiling. Americans hide their emotions from themselves.

Learning styles. Learning styles between Asian and Non-Asian students, basically, did not show significant differences. This study investigated international students' accustomed learning styles, or instructional expectations, from several angles, including: verbal participation, written participation, the importance of completing work by the deadline, and the importance of interaction with classmates. According to the international student interviewees, their pre-existing learning styles and expectations influenced their adaptation to American academic culture. The results of this investigation are presented on Table 9.

Table 9

Comparison of American Students' and International Students' Learning Backgrounds

Learning Expectations	American	European	South American	Asian	African
Completion of work by deadline	variable	high	high	high	high
Written participation	medium	medium	medium	high	high
Verbal participation	high	high	high	low	low
Interaction with classmates	high	high	high	low	low

Note. The findings reported on this table represent a summation of the responses given by the 16 qualitative interviewees in this study.

Since the interviewees were at different stages in their academic careers, from Ph.D. candidates who were nearly finished with their dissertations to beginning Master's

students, the interviewees' previous learning experiences happened in different circumstances, during either undergraduate study or both graduate and undergraduate study. However, interviewee responses indicated that country and academic culture were the characteristics that determined students' previous learning experiences and expectations, rather than the international students' academic level. As can be seen in Table 7, the previous learning styles and expectations of international students varied from the experience they encountered studying in America. While international students from Europe and South America found American instructors, and deadlines in particular, to be more lenient than they were accustomed to, international students from Asian countries found the learning and teaching style in the U.S. to be quite different from what they had been accustomed to. Essentially, American, European, and South American learning styles can be described as student-centered, whereas Asian learners were accustomed to teacher-centered learning styles, with minimal or no interaction between students, or between the students and the instructors. Asian international students were instead accustomed to extremely high levels of written participation, in comparison to their experience in America. Examining the results shown on Table 7 may show why Asian international students tended to report greater difficulties in adapting to learning in the U.S. than non-Asian international students; non-Asian international students participating in this study had learning experiences and styles that were similar to what they encountered in America, whereas Asian international students' experiences learning in the U.S. were significantly different from what they had been accustomed to. The exception to this rule was the single interviewee from Ghana, whose previous learning experience was similar to the experience of the Asian international students.

To illustrate these differences, Jeck, an Asian student from the Philippines, described his learning and the difficulties he had to face when he studied in his country:

In my country there are more difficulties in school than here. You can ask questions [in class] but it is not usual in my country. [We have] more classes. There are fewer hours for class here [in America]. They [our universities in the Philippines] don't have much money for projects at PhD. level in my country. We [students] take more classes and find answers to questions. We depend on the teacher[s] more. The American learning process is quite different [than the experience] in my country. At home we didn't actually do the experiments in the lab, we read about them online. All we could do is ask practical questions . . . how [can we] get the answer?

A European student, Alex, from Hungary, shared his learning experiences in Hungary and Denmark.

We have much more [participation and interaction in Hungary] than here [in America] in class, [as long as] it is related to the topic. In my university [in Hungary], it was much more interactive. In my country everyone would begin to talk. In experimental psychology the college students talk a lot in class in my country. They are so interested in the topic they just talk. [However] compared to Denmark [where the participation was even higher], there was not much participation in my country.

Nabo, from Ghana, was used to classes which were divided into small groups, as American classes often are. However, Nabo's experiences are far more similar to Asian

international students' experiences, because there was still no focus on student interaction with other students or with the instructor.

We do not have classroom interaction in Ghana, [even] in a Communication Skills class. They will give some statements and ask if it is right or what is wrong. There is a presentation in class. We identify grammar mistakes. We work in groups. The professor will say, "Group A, what mistakes did you find?" There is a presentation of the findings. Most of the time students sit there quietly and listen to the professor present the lecture.

The international students interviewed in this study demonstrated different levels of adaptation in learning and life in America, motivated by their practical needs, and filtered through their individual cultural backgrounds. Ranging from objective factors such as time management, to subjective factors, or cultural adjustments, such as comfort interacting with peers and with instructors, international students' necessary adaptations are complex and variable. Essentially, living and learning in an intercultural environment, international students consciously or unconsciously changed or transformed themselves when adapting to American culture. Additionally, there was a notable difference between the cultural insights and adjustments necessary for Asian and non-Asian international students.

Adaptation and Transition

As previously mentioned, this study defines adaptation as conscious decisions. Transition, on the other hand, entails the subconscious transformation of established perspectives. Due to factors in their external environment (life in globalized society) and their internal adjustments (their cross-cultural adaptations) necessary to deal with life and

learning in America, international students are very likely to change some of their original cultural values and established perspectives after studying and living in the U.S. During analysis of the interview data, the researcher noted two phenomena, or signifiers, indicating that participating international students had changed in regards to their original cultural values or perspectives: (a) conscious cultural evaluation, and (b) conscious interaction preferences. Additionally, the researcher noted that international students' degree of transition fell into three distinct categories, labeled by the researcher as (a) values unchanged, (b) values changed, and (c) values in transition.

Conscious cultural evaluation. Some of the international students participating in the qualitative portion of this study were very openly and consciously aware of ways in which they had transformed as a result of living and studying in the United States social and academic environment. In addition to being aware of ways in which they had transformed, respondents were often able to explain the reasons for their transformation. As an example, people with different cultural values often use different approaches to deal with or face difficulties or problems. Some international students took the different cultural values they encountered in America as an opportunity to reshape their lives or perspectives. These students evaluated the challenges they encountered and compared American perspectives to their original perspectives. These international students could then choose or select the perspective they preferred, as part of their adaptation to U.S. culture. For example, Thran, from Sri Lanka, explained how her troubles with asking for help from strangers led to her conscious transformation:

In my country if somebody falls down everyone comes to help [we don't need to ask because people always care about and help each other]. Here everyone is

independent and don't help you. They are straight forward to the face, whether [you] like it or not, [but] they are honest. In my country, [we] hide [our] emotions. Saying the truth is something I may not be able to do. [However] I like for people to say the truth about their emotions. I will let my child be honest about her emotions.

Yu, who was a teacher for several years in China, was shocked by the way American students would create disturbances in class by interrupting the lecture with questions. Initially, she was very upset whenever students in classes she attended in the U.S. would stop the teacher's planned lecture or instruction in order to ask questions. However, with some time and experience, observing the behavior of the students and instructors, she reevaluated her reactions and opinions, and eventually decided that the American learner-centered style of instruction was beneficial. In fact, Yu decided that when she next taught classes she would use a learner-centered approach:

Personally, I will adopt the teaching style of "learner centered" into my teaching strategy, if I have a chance to become an educator again. I [will] expect students to find and ask questions, any type of questions. Sometimes, some questions students ask or are confused about are very simple or easy, but these questions might inspire other students' various thinking or clear other students' confusion. Their questions [will] also let me know where my students are in learning a subject.

Conscious interaction preferences. One signifier illustrating the degree to which international students may have changed, or transformed, during their process of adaptation, can be seen by whether or not their preferences for interaction have changed.

Essentially, before spending time in the U.S., international students have never had to choose between whether or not they prefer the company of their co-nationals, or Americans, or other international students, or some mixture of all groups. After a period of trial and experimentation, international students realize that the different groups they encounter, in terms of culture, are different, and they develop some preference for interaction. This may also be tied to a re-examination or transformation of their own habits, and patterns of behavior or interaction.

From adaptation to transformation, international students' change can be significantly examined from their social interaction orientation. In this study, the interview data analysis showed two major orientations regarding international students' social interaction. The majority of international students tended to interact with their co-nationals or other international students. The minority of international students tended to interact with American students or Americans.

As this study has explored before, in addition to limited time, language communication, and cultural difference, most international students preferred to socially interact with their native friends and other international students because they still retain their major cultural values and did not change much. Gary only socialized with Brazilian students and other international students from South America. His experiences in dealing with cultural differences in America were not pleasant:

We have many things from America in our culture and that helps me to not be shocked or surprised when I got here. The religious values here are different from mine and the relationship values here are different from mine. Moral values that [are] difficult to describe. You will have patriotic feelings more strongly here and

conservative feeling here is different. I think globalization did not change me.

The ways here just doesn't work with me as well as what I do.

The minority of international students tended to be involved in American life.

These minority students can actively accept and enjoy American culture. Emi almost only interacts with Americans and she intended to stay in America for her rest of life:

When I was 12 or 13 I decided that I wanted to go to the US and live my life here.

I changed to be more like the American culture. I live with 2 American boys.

When my apartment mates have friends over we go out, but otherwise I don't go out much. In the cafeteria I socialized. Usually I read when I have free time. I am teaching now. I have a boyfriend now too. He is American.

Degrees of transition. International students' specific degrees of transition, in this study, were sorted into three categories: (a) values unchanged, (b) values changed, and (c) values in transition.

Value unchanged. One Asian international student, Taro, represents the first type of transition (group a), in which the student's values remain relatively static and true to the original culture. Taro reported:

I have a basic standard of culture. I am OK with new things, method[s], custom[s], culture[s], [and] lifestyles. [However,] we never hug in Japan. We maybe only hug with a close girl friend. I [have hugged] several times here, but it is not my habit. No original culture value [has] changed for me.

Nabo tried to maintain the food that he was used to eating in his country, even though it was not easy to find the same type of vegetables in American. He adjusted his daily meals by using similar type of vegetables.

I have not changed much, a little. 95% I am the same as before. For example, [I care about food I eat everyday.] Eating on campus sometimes I eat American food, but I cook a lot at home. I try to maintain what I am eating. [Regularly] I have to make sure I have my own food. I will not miss any American food here. I can use mash[ed] potato to cook food, but in my country I use Cassava and Pantene, but here I can use mash[ed] potato to substitute.

Values changed. Judy, an international student from Thailand, represents the second type of transition (group b). She has enjoyed American culture since she was an exchange student in high school and has been consciously engaging in and integrating with American society. She reports, “Compared to most Thai young people at my age, I have become more independent than them. American culture has benefited me to overcome or take the risk by myself.” Judy also described the future she envisioned in America: “All of my friends are American people. And you know I’m going to get married with an American man. I [am] used to [hanging] out and talk[ing] with American people.”

Emi, from France, has tried to become involved in American culture. Since she planned on living in America, she changed herself in order to integrate with American society:

I changed to be more like the American culture. I smile more here. It is easy to talk to strangers. In France you don’t talk to strangers. I gained weight here a little. I chose to go to the US early in life, but I have worked on it and I am here and I want to stay here.

Values in transition. Yu, from China, represents the third type of transition (group c), who have kept portions of their cultural habits and values, but who transformed in

regards to other aspects of life and study. She found that she had accepted and adapted some American cultural values and habits without noticing, and that she unconsciously followed the American way of doing things, even when she returned to China for vacation:

After all, although [China] is my home country, some of my habits or [world] views have been changed a lot. I noticed that one of my friends laughed at me when sitting in their car and always remembering to buckle up the seat belt.

As a note of explanation, Yu stated that Chinese people, generally, were not used to fastening their seat belts when driving. Ko, also from China, has been enjoyed more freedom and privacy in America than she was accustomed to feeling in China. She found herself getting used to the freer customs of intrapersonal relationships in America:

I think I really enjoy more privacy and freedom in America and I don't think I can go back to my original cultural value on this point. In China, nowadays, everyone still has to follow their "leaders" (bosses or supervisors in a workplace, particularly if you are hired by the government or schools), whether you are a graduate student or a civil servant. If you failed to follow the restriction set by the government, you must be fired by your leader in your workplace. That sounds ridiculous, doesn't it? My American professors have never asked anything about my private business because that's not his business.

Overall, the findings of these qualitative interviews demonstrate that many Asian students may exercise very conscious control over the extent to which they change their original cultural values. At the same time, globalization has acted to bring a tremendous

amount of American common culture into Asia, which may reduce the difficulty for Asian students transitioning to living and learning in America.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

Summary

The purpose of this study has been to provide current information regarding international students' adaptation to life and learning in America, as well as to further explore their cultural transition, considering the growing effects of globalization (Finger, 2005; Merriam, Caffarella, & Baumgartner, 2007; Merriam, & Young, 2008). This study combined the approaches of several previous studies of international students' adaptation (Chirkov et al., 2007; Lee, 2007; Mullen & Tallent-Runnels, 2006; Ye, 2006) to identify five factors (Comfort with Oral English, Interaction, Motivation, Online-Support, and Perception of Instructors) influencing international student's experiences studying abroad. Additionally, this study explored international students' adaptation from two different angles, investigating both their Sociocultural Adaptation (Cemalcilar, Falbo, & Stapleton, 2005) to living in America and their Academic Adaptation (Ward & Kennedy, 1999) to studying and learning in America. One idea tested by this study is that international students might have experienced relatively little difference in adjusting to life and learning in America, compared to the experience of past international learners, because of the influence of globalization. In addition, this study also examined the extent to which current international students had experienced cultural transition. This study utilized a mixed-method research approach which included two portions, a quantitative study and a qualitative study.

Participants in this study included 115 international students enrolling in a southeastern American university from 2009 to 2010. After data collection and analysis,

the results were found to support one of the study's initial concepts, that globalization was diminishing the culture differences experienced by international students studying in America. Additionally, as shown by the quantitative results, this study's research model was found to have a significant correlation with international students' adaptation to learning and life in the U.S.; however, student major and student co-national group size were found to have no significant influence on international students' adaptation. Additionally, analysis of the qualitative interview transcripts revealed that international students participating in this study fell into three distinct groups, with members of each group undergoing different levels of cultural transition. The researcher labeled these groups: values unchanged, values changing, and values changed.

It has been argued that the influence of globalization may have, to a large extent, uniformized the world (Finger, 2005). Supporting this idea, the international students participating in this study reported that globalization had facilitated their adaptation to living and learning in the U.S. According to their responses, the international students participating in this study have all, more or less, transformed their worldviews after processing inevitable inner negotiation between their own previous cultural values and American cultural values. However perspectives or values stemming from different cultural backgrounds still distinguished people from each other significantly. Many participating international students noted that their greatest difficulties in adapting to life and learning in America stemmed from encountering and experiencing cultural differences while interacting with Americans.

Conclusions

The purpose of this study has been to update the information available and to provide a current perspective regarding international students' adaptation to academic learning and life in the U.S. The research model created for the quantitative portion of this research utilized five factors drawn from previous studies (Chirkov et al., 2007; Lee, 2007; Mullen & Tallent-Runnels, 2006; Ye, 2006a, 2006b) to examine the participants' current social adaptation (Cemalcilar, Falbo, & Stapleton, 2005) and academic adaptation (Ward & Kennedy, 1999). The qualitative portion of this study explored the process of international students' cultural transition by investigating their adaptation to American culture in life and learning. Due to the influence of globalization (Finger, 2005; Merriam, & Young; 2008), it was hypothesized that current international students' life and study experiences in America might differ from international students' experiences as reported in previous studies. Additionally, it was hypothesized that international students' experiences in adaptation and transition might vary as a function of their field of study and the size of their co-national support groups.

In terms of the three main study hypotheses, analysis of the quantitative findings led to the following conclusions: (a) there was a significant correlation between the five independent variables (Comfort with Oral English, Interaction, Motivation, Online-Support, and Perception of Instructors) and study's two dependent variables (Sociocultural Adaptation, and Academic Adaptation); (b) there was no significant difference between the size of international students co-national groups and the two dependent variables; (c) there was no significant relationship between the international students' majors and the two dependent variables.

The Five Influencing Factors

One of the concepts motivating this research was the idea that globalization (Finger, 2005) had been exerting an influence on adult learners (Merriam, & Young, 2008). Considering international students in particular, the researcher hypothesized that globalization's effects on cultures, economies, and technology, had influenced and altered the situations and experiences of people who had left their countries to study abroad. In terms of this study's independent variables, international students' motivation to study abroad (Motivation) is associated with economic considerations such as the pursuit of the best possible higher education or better employment opportunities. English communication (Comfort with Oral English), social interaction with Americans (Interaction), and international students' perceptions of American professors (Perception of Instructor) are all related to culture. Online social network support (Online Support) has changed, or more specifically expanded, because of advances in technology.

The first quantitative research question in this study investigated the relationships between five independent variables (Comfort with Oral English, Interaction, Motivation, Online-Support, and Perception of Instructors) and study's two dependent variables (Sociocultural Adaptation, and Academic Adaptation). Each of the five independent variables had been used in previous studies and had been shown to be critical factors affecting various aspects of international students' adaptation. In this study each of the five independent variables was shown to be significantly correlated with the two dependent variables, Sociocultural Adaptation and Academic Adaptation, which indicates that the current research model can be considered a meaningful and reasonable composition.

In particular, international students' perceptions of their instructors showed the strongest relationship with both their academic adaptation and the second highest relationship to their sociocultural adaptation. Essentially, international students' social experience and academic experience are closely tied to their academic environment. To international students, social life in America may be frequently sacrificed to achieve academic success. International students' situations, as explained by their qualitative interviews, may help explain this situation.

International students' who volunteered to be interviewed explained that they often needed to adopt different learning styles to successfully deal with interaction in American classrooms, or for online classes. At the same time, due to the international students' motivation for studying in America, which, according to the quantitative data, was centered on gaining a degree and access to improved job opportunities, international students frequently avoided actual informal social activities, to concentrate instead on their studies and their work. Because of this, American professors, University administrators, and fellow American students, co-national students, and other international students often made up the entirety of international students' local social networks. In this hierarchy, the international students' teachers stood out in the international students' perceptions as being most important, and thus were strongly tied to the international students' academic adaptation, but also to their social adaptation, to the extent that social adaptation actually occurred. An additional reason U.S. professors may take a central role in international students' local social networks has to do with the importance international students, particularly those from Asian countries, place in the opinions and attitudes of instructors. Essentially, U.S. professors' teaching attitudes and

behaviors may be critically important to the international students' self-confidence, learning, and success in their pursuit of education. Because of this, international students' perceptions of their instructors were very strongly tied to their process of adapting to learning and life in America.

This composition of the research model presented significant relationship between the variables. In other words, this assumption may sustain even though the influence of globalization could not be specifically explained from numerical results. However, the assumption gained the specific support from qualitative results. Almost all the interviewees reported they felt little difficulties in adapting to learning and life in the U.S.

International Students' Local Co-national Populations

The group size of international students did not affect their adaptation to learning and life in America. The researcher hypothesized that the growing population in several international student groups might effectively help their co-nationals reduce the difficulty of adaptation to American culture. However, the results of quantitative data analysis did not support the hypothesis. One possible explanation supporting this result, from qualitative analysis, was that online social network support and the available information provided through the internet for international students' life and learning gave them the support that was needed. Simply put, through the internet, international students could keep in touch with their family and friends, as well as obtain necessary information pertaining to their learning and life. Even the international students in small groups had low degree of difficulties learning and living in America, with use of the internet.

International Students' Fields of Study

The results of quantitative analysis also indicated that the international student participants' majors, including humanities fields and science fields, did not influence their adaptation to life and learning in America. The qualitative analysis in this study provided three possible explanations to the result of quantitative analysis. First of all, learning in English was a challenge for the international students with English as a second language regardless of their major field of study. Secondly, since tests were not the only criteria of grading students' academic achievement more than a kind of class assignment gave international students more opportunities to maintain appropriate academic standing and achieve their learning goals. Thirdly, no matter what fields international student were majoring in, most spent a large portion of their time studying or doing experiments. Their school work gave them limited time for their social life. Fourthly, most international students maintained interaction with their native friends during their limited spare time, rather than socializing with Americans. Therefore, whether international students majored in humanities fields or in science fields, their sociocultural life and academic learning in America may not be influenced by their majors.

Discussion

This study investigated variables affecting international students' adaptation to academic and socio-cultural life in America. In doing this, this study expanded upon previous studies by adopting independent and dependent variables from several studies. Therefore, the composition of this research model is different from any models of the previous studies. The discussion in the following sections will address the significance of

the unique findings of this study as well as the ways in which the results of this study expanded upon or contrasted with the results of previous studies. Additionally, the discussion will address a number of ways in which the results of the present study interact with Transformative Learning Theory, Social Capital Theory, and Self-Determination Theory.

This study adapted previous studies' scales in order to create a new research model investigating five factors of international students' adaptation (Comfort with Oral English, Interaction, Motivation, Online-Support, and Perception of Instructors). It was hypothesized that these factors used in this study have changed or are changing due to the trends and realities of Globalization. Therefore, a new instrument, International Student Transition Survey (ISTS), was formed in terms of different independent variables and dependent variables. This new model provided new findings and results which are noticeably different from any previous studies.

The analysis of the quantitative results revealed that international students' comfort with oral English (Lee, 2007) had strong correlation with their academic and sociocultural adaptation. Compared to the other variables, international students' comfort with oral English showed the strongest correlation with their sociocultural adaptation. The design of the survey questions (Lee, 2007; Ward & Kennedy, 1999) may account for the result. In terms of the analysis of the quantitative results, most of the participants labeled themselves "Neither agree or nor disagree" (Lee, 2007) with their fear or anxiety when speaking in English. This choice might imply that most of the participants felt not much confident with their oral English communication. The most participants responded "Moderately difficult" (Ward & Kennedy, 1999) when dealing with problems in daily life

or interacting with local social communities. This choice, “Moderately difficult” might have reflected that these participants were not strongly competent in dealing with sociocultural issues in America. These two choices might be compatible because less confidence with oral English communication might cause more difficulties in life or in dealing with social intrapersonal relationship.

English proficiency, especially oral communication, strongly relates to international students’ academic success and social interaction (Kim, 2006; Lee, 2007; Perrucci & Hu, 1995; Trice, 2004). Similar to the results of the quantitative analysis, the qualitative results showed that international students’ English proficiency was related to their adaptation to learning and life in America. However, most the interviewees explained that their English proficiency was not necessarily connected with their satisfaction regarding social interactions with Americans. With cultural differences, most of international students tended to socialize with their native friends to enjoy their life in America, rather than interact with Americans. This situation may have reduced the need for these students to use or be comfortable with oral English.

According to the quantitative data analysis of this study, the most specific motivations for international students to study in America were to pursue better higher education and better employment opportunities. Similarly, the results of the qualitative analysis of this study provided evidence supporting the importance of these two motivations, pursuit of a better higher education and better career opportunities, for international students. International students’ educational experiences in the American university not only have challenged them to change learning styles, but also have brought them the respect of their native people.

Through the internet, international students can keep their native social networks, including those in their home countries and in America, which might help them decrease their difficulties in American life (Cemalicular, Falbo, & Stapleton, 2005; Ward & Kennedy, 1994; Ye, 2006b). However, the internet use might also have decreased these international students' need and motivation to interact with Americans. This situation has partially accounted for the reason why international students felt it difficult to build or maintain a deep friendship with Americans.

For international students, interpersonal interactions with people from America or other different cultures frequently requires making allowances and adjustments for differences in culture. This can cause discomfort, so international students may have second thoughts about attending public social events such as sports games, or more private social events such as student parties, or even personal social events such as the reunions, weddings, or funerals of American friends or associates.

This choice can have consequences because, while international students' are pursuing adaptation to life and learning in America, their interaction with Americans or other international students is a determinant of how well they might be able to adapt their life and learning. However, during this process of interaction international students must balance the need to take care of their studies on one hand, and the difficulties associated with adapting to American cultural differences on the other hand. In this study, international student interviewees reported feeling pressure in both Learning and Life Management and Cultural Adjustment. These two factors might account for international students' feelings of uncertainty or discomfort in deciding whether or not to socialize in local American community or social events. The first factor is simply related to how the

interviewees manage their learning and life in order to complete their study in the U.S.; the second factor refers to the interviewees' perceptions of their own adaptations to cultural differences. Additionally, the qualitative interviewees' responses showed a notable difference regarding the experiences of Asian and Non-Asian students in social interaction with Americans.

International students' social networks with American peers are correlated to important benefits because contact with American students positively influences international students' academic experiences (Trice, 2004). This emphasis on the importance of social facilitation from international students' co-nationals is an application of social capital theory (Alfred, 2002; Lin, 2001; Perrucci & Hu, 1995; Trice, 2004). Most international students interacted with their co-nationals. As several relevant factors indicated in this study, including limited English communication, limited social time, and cultural difference prompted most international students participate in and enjoy their co-nationals' social activities. While most international students seldom interacted with Americans, due to objective reasons, such as limited spare time, socialization with their co-nationals can be a major way to relieve stress due to heavy academic loads.

This study indicated that international students had different attitudes towards American teaching and learning styles, compared to previous related studies. Previous studies focused on ways American professors could adjust their instruction to make learning more comfortable and accessible for international students (Britton, Chamberlain, Davis, Easley, Grunden & Williams, 2003; Lee & Sheared, 2002; Mullen & Tallent-Runnels, 2006); however, the participants in this study evaluated the American learning

and teaching style as being a more effective way of learning and as serving as a positive challenge which allowed them to improve their original understandings as well.

International students indicated that they valued several specific strategies of teaching and learning they encountered in America. Most students were impressed with the student-centered way of teaching and learning (e.g., Yu from China), the clear syllabi (e.g., Yeng from Taiwan), the group discussions (e.g., Emi from France, Ron from China), and the required oral presentations in American classrooms (e.g., Ko from China). These American pedagogical techniques emphasized students' independent study, team work, and ability to completely learn and express their learning. Additionally, the strategy that tests are not the only way of grading students is very different from that utilized in most other countries, particularly in Asian countries. Although the American ways of teaching and learning may have challenged the international students with different original learning styles, these students positively evaluated American teaching and learning as being more creative, more effective, and more empowering.

Compared to other educational learning environments in Asia and Africa, international students did not experience as much competitiveness in the American university. The international student participants in this study may have had challenges in adaptation to different learning styles (Lee & Sheard, 2002; Taras & Rowney, 2007) however they did not experience as much stress in individual learning because most of them came from very competitive educational environments. In addition, American universities provided international students more opportunities for scholarships.

This study may contribute major findings and discussion regarding theories used in this study. International students do experience cultural transformation, but less culture

shock (Furnham & Bochner, 1986; Kohls, 1984) which can be viewed, in terms of Transformative Learning Theory, as a disorienting dilemma Mezirow (1991). The major theory adopted in this study, Transformative Learning theory (Daloz, 1999; Kegan, 1994; Mezirow, 1991), was used as a framework to analyze international students' transition to living and learning in the U.S. According to Mezirow (2000), "learning is understood as the process of using a prior interpretation to construe a new or revised interpretation of the meaning of one's experience as a guide to future action" (p. 5). In order to transform, adult learners must make adjustments in their frame-of-reference, which is rooted in their cultural background (Mezirow, 2000). In this study, international students had to adjust to cultural differences encountered in learning and life based on their own frame of references.

This study's findings indicate that international students' transitions fell into three groups, delineated through Mezirow's transformative learning theory, as well as a third group. Two groups of international students' transition, in cultural values changing and cultural changed, were consisted with and described by Mezirow' (1991, 2000) transformative learning theory (1991, 2000). In that, some students demonstrated adaptation without transforming to any great extent, while some other students underwent premise reflection and transformed their socio-cultural and academic values and perspectives. Additionally, one group of students was noticeably undergoing transformation in response to other aspects of their situation. The author identifies these three groups of students as values unchanged, values changed, and values in transition.

The group of students with cultural values in transition still experienced transformative learning, though their highly selective acceptance of different cultural

values was not specifically discussed or interpreted in Mezirow's (1991, 2000) transformative learning theory. Due to exposure to a new society, international students might change their cultural values (Kegan, 1994). Strictly speaking, most international students in this study should be sorted into this "moderated" category and few international students were sorted into the other two categories: cultural value unchanged and cultural value changed. Most of the international students would compare different cultural values and consider adjusting their original cultural values or accepting the new cultural values. This is a process of inner judgment and negotiation with their original cultural frame of reference. This cultural transition indicates that international students engage in transformative learning.

Another relevant theory, Social Capital theory (Lin, 2001; Lin, Cook & Burt, 2001) focuses on the resources embedded in one's social network and the individuals' ability to access resources that may benefit their actions. In terms of Lin's view, individuals' actions serve to either maintain or gain valued resources (Lin, 2001). Therefore, social capital theory provides a useful framework for viewing international students' interaction with Americans (Alfred 200; Chaney & Martine, 2005; Krapels & Davis, 2005; Lin 2001; Trice, 2004;). Basically, the result of this study was consistent with social capital theory, when international students engaged in interaction and negotiation to obtain necessary help from Americans, co-nationals, or online information. The analysis of this study's results indicated that international students' co-nationals and the internet provided resources or convenient facilitation for international students in life and learning in America. This result also demonstrated that social interaction with

Americans to obtain more resources or help has become far less necessary than in the past for international students.

With the significant changes mentioned above, this study showed that international students have more options for seeking out social resources in a host country than before. Theoretically, newcomers seek help largely from the local physical society in a host country. The analysis of this study results indicated that, with globally advanced technology (Grant, 1999) and international migration, newcomers have more numerous and more convenient ways to seek necessary information and facilitation through the internet and from co-nationals who have lived in the host country longer. In this study, international students can reach necessary information regarding life and learning through websites or can access necessary facilitation directly from their co-nationals' experiences more than from American local society.

Deci and Ryan (2000) developed Self-Determination Theory to investigate people's inherent growth tendencies and the ways in which their innate psychological needs either support or undermine their attempts to master and integrate their experiences into a self-satisfied perception of self and the world. Self-Determination Theory, moreover, defines contextual factors that can influence people's motivation and performance (Deci & Ryan, 2002). Self-Determination Theory provides a framework to understand and analyze international students' motivation to study abroad which embraces their inner thoughts, their decisions, and which takes into account the influence of their social environments. Previous studies reported that international students' motivations to study in America were to pursue better education (Chirkov et al., 2007; Chirkov et al., 2008). However, this study showed international students attempted to

pursue better career opportunities, in addition to a pursuit of better education. This finding indicated that more international students intended to find jobs in the U.S., when American higher educational institutions are eager to recruit more international students to study in the U.S. (Townes, 2008).

Limitations

After data collection, the researcher had considered about conducting a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA), in order to develop the model of this study to a research model for studying international students' adaptations. However, the research model in this study was not effectively tested because of the small sample size and many items. In general rules of CFA (Castello & Osborne, 2005; Pohlmann, 2004), the appropriate ratio of sample and items is 20:1. The ratio of sample and items in the study did not fulfill this requirement. More data would need to be collected to further measure the relationship between the factors in this research model.

Very few previous studies have explored the relationship between globalization and international students' adaptation in America; therefore it is difficult to exactly measure whether factors of international students' adaptation in the U.S., such as cultural shock, are now dramatically different from international students' adaptation to American culture in the past decades.

This study provided updated information with regards to international students' cultural adaptation in life and learning; however, several limitations pertaining to the sample and instruments might have caused incomplete results. For example, the composition and location of the sample may have resulted in less objective data

collection. Regarding the ISTS, the narration and the appropriateness of various survey questions might also have affected the participants' responses.

Although the returns of respondents are nearly up to 39% of the international students in the southeastern American university in this study, several limitations regarding the sample might have influenced the results of this study. The first limitation referred to the composition of the sample. Most of the respondents came from Asia and few of them were from Europe or Africa; therefore the results of this study might describe limited adaptations of international students in America. The second limitation referred to the location of the sample. The participants in this study were from a southeastern American university. The results of this study might provide limited generalized information about current international students' adaptations in America.

Whether the survey questions have been appropriately interpreted may have influenced the participants' responses. Most respondents presented positive evaluation in their motivation of studying abroad, social interaction with other students, comfort of spoken English, perception of American professors, adaptation in learning, and adaptation in social culture. However, the respondents presented slightly negative evaluation in the social network support through the internet. In this study, all the survey questions were derived from previous studies and have been proven to have high reliability and validity; however, a portion of the survey questions might have been beyond the respondents' general knowledge or experience.

After re-examining the data and the questionnaire of the Online Support section, there were three characteristics found and they might explain the lower mean of the predictor than the others. In the data of this set of questions, only four out of 14 questions

(question 22, 24, 25 and 26) revealed means averaging higher than three. With these unusual results, this data reflected two possible problems in this set of questionnaire: one was based on the description of questions which might have confused the respondents, and the other was about the content of questions which might have been beyond the respondents' knowledge. For example, in question 25 ($M = 2.50$), "I can receive emotional relief from online interactions," the words, "can receive emotional relief from" might confuse the respondents "who made emotional relief?" and "what kind of online interactions was referred to at that moment?" Due to the confusion as they perceived this type of question, the respondents might select likert-point 1 or 2, based on their uncertainty.

In addition, in question 20 ($M = 2.33$), "I visit a local website (Newsgroup) organized by a student association of my native country (run by students at my university in the U.S. or students at another university in the U.S.)," the mean score of the responses to this question was relatively low. According to the qualitative results of this study, one possible reason to explain the low mean score was the use of advanced online tools of communication, such as E-mail, Skype, MSN, or Facebook. Through these convenient tools of communication, interaction with social networks was simple and easy. The respondents might not value the need to communicate with friends through a single specific website. In other words, several survey questions used in previous studies (e.g., Ye, 2006a, 2006b) are perhaps no longer appropriate for current respondents, due to the development and growing popularity of more advanced online communication technologies since the studies were conducted. In conclusion, the online social support variable may have had a lower mean than the other variables because of respondents'

confusion due to the descriptions of some of the questions, as well as because of students' changing experiences in using more recent internet sites and technologies.

In addition, there was missing data on several of the survey questions in this study. The question left blank meant that the respondents might be confused about these questions and did not know how to answer them. For instance, one of this type of questions (in the Sociocultural Adaptation factor) was "How difficult has it been to deal with bureaucracy?" In this question, the key word which might confuse international student respondents was bureaucracy. They might not be sure what "bureaucracy" exactly meant because the word might represent different authorities, such as Federal Government or school administration. These survey questions also influenced data collection.

Recommendations for Policy or Practice

This study has provided updated cross-cultural information in adult learning, especially in regards to international students' adaptation to American culture in learning and life. This study, in addition, attempted to externally explore the current influence of globalization on international students' learning and life, it further sought to understand international students' internal cultural transition by transformative learning theories (Kegan, 1994; Mezirow, 1991, 2000; Tyler, 2008)) and other relevant theories (Deci & Ryan, 2000, 2002; Lin, 2001; Lin, Cook & Burt, 2001).

This updated information has contributed important research reference in current adult learning: cross-cultural adult learning, adult's transformative learning, the American culture which might or might not cause international students' cultural

transition, and the influence of the American higher educational system (Perrucci & Hu, 1995; Taras & Rowney, 2007) on international students' learning and life.

This study has also provided adult educators, practitioners, and researchers with important information regarding adult education, service for international students, and interdisciplinary study related to adult learning. For example, knowing the discomfort Asian international students face in class discussions, or even in asking questions in class, teachers could speak to the international students after class, very early in the semester, and talk to them about the differences in expectations for classroom participation. Teachers could advise Asian international students to seek outside help, such as at University writing, speaking, or thinking centers, in practicing talking about class materials.

Additionally, knowing the fear that international students face about image, and about making mistakes in public, practitioners should create a classroom environment of trust, in which they clearly explain, early in the semester, that it is ok to ask 'stupid' questions, or that there is no such thing as a 'stupid' question. Teachers should explain to all the students, both American and international, that they must be careful never to laugh or mock each other in class for asking any sort of question, or they will all be afraid to ask questions. Teachers should explain that it is not shameful not to know something, but that it is extremely foolish not to ask when you truly do not know or understand things. Teachers with international students in class could begin their semester instruction with a discussion of different teaching styles, such as teacher-centered and student-centered, so that all the students, both American and international, are both more aware of what the expectations are in the American class, and also aware of how the international students

might be used to experiencing education. Particularly motivated teachers might ask American students to volunteer to act as study partners, or American culture guides, for international students in their classes.

Practitioners who work with International students might create an International Day program, in which international students are invited to talk about their cultures and perhaps to cook some of their traditional foods or wear their traditional outfits. Programs of this sort should be designed to happen as frequently as possible. Not only does this sort of program serve to introduce international students to American students, it serves to create more interaction in both directions.

Additional programs of importance are organized programs to help international students read and interpret academic writing. While many universities have writing and speaking centers, few have centers devoted to reading. This is a particular weakness of international students, since academic writing could almost be considered a separate language, consisting of rules that are not taught to international students in their native countries. Plagiarism is another problem that is particularly difficult for many international students, since the American academic rules of plagiarism often go directly against practices international students were taught in their native countries.

Due to the increasing number of international students in American higher educational institutions (IIE, 2008; Lee, 2007; Towners, 2008), international students' learning and life has been a consistent focus of research in the field of adult learning. Instructors and administrators in American universities have to continuously update their information associated with international students' current situations in learning and life (Merriam & Young, 2008; Perrucci & Hu, 1995; Taras & Rowney, 2007). American

instructors' teaching styles or cultural backgrounds directly relate to international students' understanding and learning (Britton et al., 2003; Mullen & Tallen-Runnels, 2006). The administrators in American universities should maintain collecting and updating the information or knowledge referring to international students' needs in life and learning in order to effectively recruit more international students and actually take care of international students when they study in America.

Recommendations for Future Research

Globalization has broadly impacted a variety of existing cultural practices or values in the world. Cross-cultural study will become a central part of understanding adult learning from different cultural backgrounds. It is necessary to constantly explore the development and influence of globalization on international students' adaptation in learning and life in a new environment. With the development of globalization, international students may be continuously experiencing cultural and social differences in learning and life when adapting to any change in a host society.

Oral English communication might have directly influenced international students' social interaction with Americans, and indirectly resulted in the difficulties in adapting to American culture. The result of this study indicated that reading may be another potential factor influencing international students' academic and sociocultural adaptation in America because reading has consumed a large portion of their time including using the dictionary, remembering professional academic terminology or understanding the syntax of textbooks. Reading difficulties could be the next study issue for international students' adaptation.

In addition to reading difficulties, writing difficulties might also be next important issue affecting international students' adaptation to learning or life in America.

Specifically, writing difficulties for international students contain several sub-issues: correct writing formats, grammar, academic writing plagiarism, American way of writing, and facilitation provided by writing center if available. How to improve international students' writing should be tied to their academic success and their future careers.

Closing Statements

Global cultures, American culture, and the American higher education system have all been influenced by globalization. This study has attempted to explore international adult learners' current situation in adapting to social and academic life in the United States. In many ways, this study is less complete than it could be. For example, this study has found areas in which its own quantitative instrument could be improved. Similarly, the theoretical framework utilized by this study could be refined or expanded in light of factors and findings revealed by the quantitative portion of the research. With the rapid changes occurring in available and used media and technologies, as well as in the cultures and societies of every nation on Earth, it is hard for researchers to keep pace with what is actually relevant or significant in influencing learners. However, it hoped that this study has provided a good stepping stone for the study of globalization's influence on international adult education, as well as for the study of the factors currently affecting the transitions and transformations of international adult learners.

APPENDIX A

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL



THE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN MISSISSIPPI

Institutional Review Board

118 College Drive #5147
 Hattiesburg, MS 39406-0001
 Tel: 601.266.6820
 Fax: 601.266.5509
 www.usm.edu/irb

**HUMAN SUBJECTS PROTECTION REVIEW COMMITTEE
 NOTICE OF COMMITTEE ACTION**

The project has been reviewed by The University of Southern Mississippi Human Subjects Protection Review Committee in accordance with Federal Drug Administration regulations (21 CFR 26, 111), Department of Health and Human Services (45 CFR Part 46), and university guidelines to ensure adherence to the following criteria:

- The risks to subjects are minimized.
 - The risks to subjects are reasonable in relation to the anticipated benefits.
 - The selection of subjects is equitable.
 - Informed consent is adequate and appropriately documented.
 - Where appropriate, the research plan makes adequate provisions for monitoring the data collected to ensure the safety of the subjects.
 - Where appropriate, there are adequate provisions to protect the privacy of subjects and to maintain the confidentiality of all data.
 - Appropriate additional safeguards have been included to protect vulnerable subjects.
 - Any unanticipated, serious, or continuing problems encountered regarding risks to subjects must be reported immediately, but not later than 10 days following the event. This should be reported to the IRB Office via the "Adverse Effect Report Form".
 - If approved, the maximum period of approval is limited to twelve months.
- Projects that exceed this period must submit an application for renewal or continuation.

PROTOCOL NUMBER: **10041901**

PROJECT TITLE: **Factors Influencing International Students' Academic and Sociocultural Transition in an Increasingly Globalized Society**

PROPOSED PROJECT DATES: **04/21/2010 to 10/30/2010**

PROJECT TYPE: **Dissertation or Thesis**

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATORS: **Chung-Hsien Hsu**

COLLEGE/DIVISION: **College of Education & Psychology**

DEPARTMENT: **Educational Study & Research**

FUNDING AGENCY: **N/A**

HSPRC COMMITTEE ACTION: **Expedited Review Approval**

PERIOD OF APPROVAL: **05/06/2010 to 05/05/2011**

Lawrence A. Hosman
 Lawrence A. Hosman, Ph.D.
 HSPRC Chair

5-7-2010
 Date

APPENDIX B

PARTICIPATION INFORMATION

April 21, 2010

Dear Participants:

Thank you very much for agreeing to participate in this study. This survey research is part of my dissertation. The purpose is to gather information regarding how international students enrolled in The University of Southern Mississippi (USM) adapt to American academic culture and social culture.

This study focuses on international students' transitions. The researcher is concerned with the changes international students must go through in order to adapt to learning and life in American universities. This study is intended to generate information that may be used to help improve the situations of international students. The information you provide about your experiences will provide important information for instructors, administrators, or professionals who are working with or for international students, and will allow those individuals or organizations to update their perceptions and methods.

This survey questionnaire consists of 88 questions, including eight demographic items. Please check the box to mark your response to each question on a scale of 1 to 5. You will have the choice of completing the questionnaire either on paper (which is attached) OR online (INSERT WEB ADDRESS). Please do NOT do both.

This should only take you about 20-25 minutes to complete. Participation is completely voluntary and may be discontinued at any time without penalty or prejudice to the subject. All data will be kept completely confidential. Only my dissertation committee and I will have access to the original data. I will keep it secure for three years then I will destroy it.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at chunghsien.hsu@eagles.usm.edu or 601.266.4621. You may also contact my dissertation chair, Dr. Willie Pierce, if you have any questions at w.pierce@usm.edu or 601.266.4621.

Sincerely,

Chung-Hsien Hsu

This project has been reviewed by the Human Subjects Protection Review Committee, which ensures that research projects involving human subjects follow federal regulations. Any questions or concerns about rights as a research subject should be directed to the chair of the Institutional Review Board, The University of Southern Mississippi, 118 College Drive #5147, Hattiesburg, MS 39406-0001, (601) 266-6820."

APPENDIX C

INTERNATIONAL STUDENT TRANSITION SURVEY (ISTS)

The survey has 7 sections of questions.

Each set of questions is less than a page long.

The survey should take less than 20 minutes to fill out.

These are questions about international students' feelings and opinions.

Don't take a long time thinking. Just answer instinctively.

We would like to know about your opinions and feelings as a foreign student in America, attending a U.S. university.

Demographic Data

We would like to know about your background.

Please note, all information is confidential and no answers will be reported on an individual basis.

Please type, write, or mark your answers to the following questions.

Age	<input type="checkbox"/> 18-22 <input type="checkbox"/> 23-29 <input type="checkbox"/> 30-39 <input type="checkbox"/> 40-49 <input type="checkbox"/> 50+
Gender?	<input type="checkbox"/> Male <input type="checkbox"/> Female
Nation of Birth / Nation of Origin? (Please Type or Print)	
What is your Major/what are studying? (Please Type or Print)	
What College is your Major in?	<input type="checkbox"/> Arts and Letters <input type="checkbox"/> Business <input type="checkbox"/> Education and Psychology <input type="checkbox"/> Health <input type="checkbox"/> Science and Technology
What level degree are you pursuing?	<input type="checkbox"/> Bachelors <input type="checkbox"/> Masters <input type="checkbox"/> Doctorate <input type="checkbox"/> Specialist
How many years have you studied English? (Please Type or Print)	
How many years have you been in the United States? (Please Type or Print)	

Section 1: Motivation

We would like to know why you decided to study abroad.

Please examine the following reasons and mark the answer that matches your feelings.

1 = Not at all because of this reason. 3 = Somewhat because of this reason. And 5 = Completely because of this reason.

Not at All Because of This Reason	Slightly Because of This Reason	Somewhat Because of This Reason	Very Much Because of This Reason	Completely Because of This Reason
1	2	3	4	5
I came to study abroad because I wanted to expand my career and life opportunities.				
I came to study abroad because I wanted to get a good education.				
I came to study abroad because I wanted to master a foreign language.				
I came to study abroad because a foreign university degree will open good employment opportunities for me.				
I moved to the U.S. because it was personally important to me.				
I moved to the U.S. because this is what I really want to do with my life.				
I moved to the U.S. because it was one of my life goals.				
I moved to the U.S. because it was of great personal value to me.				
I moved to the U.S. because it was an opportunity that I highly valued.				

I feel comfort because online interactions let me know that others need help adjusting, just like I do.					
---	--	--	--	--	--

Section 4: Comfort with Oral English

We would like to know how comfortable you feel with Spoken English, especially while you are interacting with American teachers and American classmates in a physical class.

Please examine the following statements and mark the appropriate answer.

1 = Strong disagree. 5 = Strongly agree. 2, 3, and 4 are Intermediate degrees.

Strong disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
1	2	3	4	5

	1	2	3	4	5
I tremble when I know that I'm going to be called on in my class.					
I keep thinking that other students are better at the English language than I am.					
It embarrasses me to volunteer answers in my class.					
I can feel my heart pounding when I'm going to be called on in my class.					
I am afraid that the other students will laugh at me when I speak the English language.					
I always feel that the other students speak the English language better than I do.					
It frightens me when I don't understand what the teacher is saying in the English language.					

Section 7: Academic Adaptation

We would like to know your perceptions of your academic performance at this U.S. university.

Please examine the following statements and mark the appropriate answer.

1 = strongly agree; 5 = strongly disagree; 2, 3, and 4 represent intermediate judgments.

Strongly disagree	disagree	neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
1	2	3	4	5

Note:

Dear participants,

Thank you very much for your time and participation in this study. The information and experiences you provided are very important to update international students' current situation in the U.S. If you would like to share of more your personal experiences in adjusting to cultural difference at USM or in the U.S., you are invited to have an interview with the researcher. If you would like to participate in the interview, please write your name and email address, and the researcher will contact you.

Your name: _____ Your email: _____

Thank you again.

APPENDIX D

QUALITATIVE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

-
1. Do you enjoy your learning and life at USM? Why or why not?
 2. Have you had experiences that might have changed your original cultural values since You studied here? Are they related to any sections of the survey questions that you have responded in this study?

(If the respondent's answer is yes, the interview questions will go to question 3; if their answer is no, the interview questions will go to question 4.)

3. What are the experiences? How did you adapt to the cultural differences? Is this change important to you?
- 3a. How has your comfort with spoken English affected your opportunities to interact with American people and to adapt to American culture?
- 3b. How often do you socialize with Americans? What are those social interactions like?
- 3c. How do educational expectations in the U.S. differ from those in your country?

Verbal participation
 Written participation
 Completion of work by deadline
 Interaction with classmates
 Classroom environment, e.g. degree of competitiveness, welcoming

- 3d. How has using the Internet helped you adapt?

Accessing news from home
 Conversing via Email, Skype, MSM Instant Messaging

- 3e. Do you think you have successfully adapted yourself to these differences? Or, is there any other help you need?
4. If you feel no change of your originally cultural value, do you agree that the influence of globalization might be a major factor mediating current adaptations of international students to cultural differences? Why?
- 4a. Have you visited your home country since you came to study in America?
- 4b. If you visited your home country since you began to study in America, did you feel like you still fit in, in your home country? Did you notice that your family, friends, relatives,

neighbors treated you differently? Why?

4c. If you have not visited your home country since you began to study in America, do you feel like you would still fit in, in your home country? Why or why not?



Thank you!

APPENDIX E

SURVEY QUESTION AUTHOR CONSENT

郵件 :: INBOX: Re: About your research

第 1 頁，共 1 頁

日期: Mon, 10 Aug 2009 10:30:42 -0400
 寄件人: Jiali Ye <joujyyx@langate.gsu.edu>
 收件人: w710931@mail.usm.edu
 主旨: Re: About your research
 附件:  2 HTML text/html 37.04 KB 

Hello, Chung-Hsien,

I am glad that you are interested in this topic. I am attaching the survey for your reference (I only have its HTML format). I am not quite sure whether it is the final version.

Hope it helps.

Jiali

>>> <w710931@mail.usm.edu> 08/06/09 12:57 PM >>>
 Dear Dr. Ye,

My name is Chung-Hsien Hsu, a doctoral student in Adult Education at The University of Southern Mississippi. I am an international student from Taiwan.

I am very honored to have the chance to read your article published in 2006, Traditional and online support networks in the cross-cultural adaptation of Chinese international students in the united states. I am interested in issues related to Asian international students' online support. As part of my dissertation, I would like to investigate cross-cultural issues. Therefore, can you please provide to me your questionnaire mentioned in the article above?

Any assistance that you can offer to me will be greatly appreciated. Thank you for your kind consideration.

Cordially,

Chung-Hsien Hsu

郵件 :: INBOX: RE: Permission

第 1 頁，共 2 頁

日期: Wed, 30 Sep 2009 09:13:15 -0700
 寄件人: Ee Lin Lee <EeLin.Lee@wwu.edu>
 收件人: "w710931@mail.usm.edu" <w710931@mail.usm.edu>
 主旨: RE: Permission

這封郵件並非以你慣用的字元集所書寫而成. 如果無法正確地顯示, 點選此處另開啓郵件於新視窗當中.

Chung-Hsien,

You have my permission to use my work as long as you cite my work properly. Good luck w/ your diss. This sounds like an interesting journey.

Cordially,
 Ee Lin Lee, Ph.D.
 Assistant Professor
 Department of Communication
 Western Washington University
 516 High Street, Mailstop 9162
 Bellingham, WA 98225-9162
 Phone: (360) 650-4032
 Fax: (360) 650-6529

From: w710931@mail.usm.edu [w710931@mail.usm.edu]
 Sent: Wednesday, September 30, 2009 9:05 AM
 To: Ee Lin Lee
 Subject: RE: Permission

Dear Dr. Lee,

Thank you for your permission. I appreciate it!

I already obtained the whole questionnaire from your MA thesis several weeks ago, and I am sure that I will need part of your questionnaire for my dissertation; therefore, I think that I still need your permission to use it. Thank you again for your assistance. Have a good day.

Cordially,

Chung-Hsien Hsu

-B0zMQ-(B Ee Lin Lee <EeLin.Lee@wwu.edu>:

> Hi Chung-Hsien,
 >
 > The questionnaire is in the appendix of my MA thesis. Yes, you can use it,
 > although you might need to obtain my MA thesis through your university's
 > library. I no longer have an electronic copy of it, since the work was done
 > so many years ago. I completed my MA at Western Michigan University. Hope
 > this helps.
 >
 > Cordially,
 > Ee Lin Lee, Ph.D.
 > Assistant Professor
 > Department of Communication
 > Western Washington University
 > 516 High Street, Mailstop 9162
 > Bellingham, WA 98225-9162
 > Phone: (360) 650-4032

郵件 :: INBOX: RE: Permission

第 2 頁，共 2 頁

>
> -----
> From: w710931@mail.usm.edu [w710931@mail.usm.edu]
> Sent: Tuesday, September 29, 2009 12:47 PM
> To: Ee Lin Lee
> Subject: Permission
>
> Dear Dr. Lee,
>
> My name is Chung-Hsien Hsu. I am a doctoral student in Adult Education at The
> University of Southern Mississippi.
>
> My dissertation topic is on the cultural transition that international
> students
> experience as they study at universities in the United States. The
> questionnaire that was part of your article "Linguistic and Cultural Factors
> in
> East Asian Students' Oral Participation in u.S. University Classrooms"
> published
> in 2007, could assist me in studying this issue.
>
> May I have your permission to use the questionnaire from the article
> mentioned
> above for my study?
>
> I deeply appreciate your kind consideration.
>
> Cordially,
>
> Chung-Hsien Hsu
>

郵件 :: INBOX: Re: permission

第 1 頁，共 1 頁

日期: Wed, 30 Sep 2009 11:46:24 -0600

寄件人: Valery Chirkov <v.chirkov@usask.ca>

收件人: w710931@mail.usm.edu

主旨: Re: permission

附件:  2 Acculturation_Motivation_Scale.rtf application/msword 62.73 KB 
 3 Motivation for Study Abroad Scales.doc application/msword 50.19 KB 

這封郵件並非以你慣用的字元集所書寫而成 如果無法正確地顯示, 點選此處另開啓郵件於新視窗當中.

Dear Chung-Hsien Hsu: please use my questionnaire. The attached format you may find useful.

Dr. Valery Chirkov

*/Dr. Valery Chirkov, Ph.D./
/Associate Professor/

/ Department of Psychology, Arts 66
University of Saskatchewan
9 Campus Drive,
Saskatoon SK, S7N5A5
Canada
Telephone: (306) 966-6529
FAX: (306) 966-6630
e-mail: /v.chirkov@usask.ca//

////

//

/

w710931@mail.usm.edu wrote:

> Dear Dr. Chirkov,
>
> My name is Chung-Hsien Hsu. I am a doctoral student in Adult Education at The
> University of Southern Mississippi.
>
> My dissertation topic is on the cultural transition that international students
> experience as they study at universities in the United States. The
> questionnaire that was part of your article "The Role of Self-Determined
> Motivation and Goals for Study Abroad in the Adaptation of International
> Students" published in 2006, could assist me in studying this issue.
>
> May I have your permission to use the questionnaire from the article mentioned
> above for my study?
>
> I deeply appreciate your kind consideration.
>
> Cordially,
>
> Chung-Hsien Hsu
>
>
>

郵件 :: INBOX: Re: permission

第 1 頁，共 2 頁

日期: Thu, 01 Oct 2009 20:53:13 +0300
 寄件人: ZEYNEP CEMALCILAR <ZCEMALCILAR@ku.edu.tr>
 收件人: w710931@mail.usm.edu
 主旨: Re: permission

這封郵件並非以你慣用的字元集所書寫而成.如果無法正確地顯示, 點選此處另開啓郵件於新視窗當中.

Sure. But most of the questionnaires are from other scholars anyways.
 You can find all the information about each of them in the methods
 section of the article.

Good luck with your work
 Zeynep

>>> <w710931@mail.usm.edu> 10/1/2009 7:24 PM >>>
 Dear Dr. Cemalcilar,

Thank you very much for your questionnaire attached. I deeply
 appreciate it.

May I have your permission to use the questionnaire from the article
 mentioned
 before for my study?

Please let me know and thank you so much again.

Cordially,

Chung-Hsien Hsu

搭 ZEYNEP CEMALCILAR <ZCEMALCILAR@ku.edu.tr>:

> Thanks for the good words. Most of the questions are here - sorry for
 > the
 > formatting, my survey was online and the formatting got lost when I
 > pasted
 > the questions to a word file. the questions for 3 of the scales are
 > already
 > given in the appendix of the article.
 >
 > Let me know if I can be any more help.
 >
 > Best
 > Zeynep
 >
 > >>> <w710931@mail.usm.edu> 10/1/2009 6:28 PM >>>
 > Dear Dr. Cemalcilar,
 >
 > My name is Chung-Hsien Hsu, a doctoral student in Adult Education at
 > The
 > University of Southern Mississippi. I am an international student
 > from
 > Taiwan.
 >
 > I am very honored to have the chance to read your article published
 > in 2005,
 > Cyber Communication: A New Opportunity for International Students'
 > Adaptation.
 > I am interested in issues related to international students'

郵件 :: INBOX: RE: Permission

第 2 頁，共 2 頁

> 2009.
>
> I am more than happy to answer any questions you may have about my
> dissertation
> project. I deeply appreciate your consideration if I can have your permission
> to
> have the questionnaire in the article, published in 2006, "Student Outcomes
> and
> Perceptions of Instructors' Demands and Support in Online and Traditional
> Classrooms."
>
> Cordially,
>
> Chung-Hsien Hsu
>
>
>
>

郵件 :: INBOX: RE: Permission

第 1 頁，共 2 頁

日期: Mon, 5 Oct 2009 21:17:49 -0500
 寄件 "Runnels, Mary" <MARY.RUNNELS@ttu.edu>
 人:
 收件 "w710931@mail.usm.edu" <w710931@mail.usm.edu>
 人:
 主旨: RE: Permission

這封郵件並非以你慣用的字元集所書寫而成. 如果無法正確地顯示, 點選此處另開啓郵件於新視窗當中.

Sure, that is fine. I would love to see your results.
 Mary K. Tallent Runnels, Ph.D.
 Professor of Educational Psychology
 Texas Tech University
 Department of Educational Psychology and Leadership
 Box 41071
 Lubbock, Texas 79409
 Fax: 806-742-2179, Phone: 806-742-1997, 225
 mary.runnels@ttu.edu

From: w710931@mail.usm.edu [w710931@mail.usm.edu]
 Sent: Monday, October 05, 2009 8:51 PM
 To: Runnels, Mary
 Subject: RE: Permission

Dear Dr. Tallent-Runnels,

What I have is the questionnaire enclosed in the the article that you published in 2006. May I use it? Please let me know.

Thank you very much for your time with my request.

Sincerely,

Chung-Hsien Hsu

->B "Runnels, Mary" <MARY.RUNNELS@ttu.edu>:

> If you have the instrument, you are sure welcome to use it as long as we get
 > credit. Do you have it?
 > Mary K. Tallent Runnels, Ph.D.
 > Professor of Educational Psychology
 > Texas Tech University
 > Department of Educational Psychology and Leadership
 > Box 41071
 > Lubbock, Texas 79409
 > Fax: 806-742-2179, Phone: 806-742-1997, 225
 > mary.runnels@ttu.edu

> From: w710931@mail.usm.edu [w710931@mail.usm.edu]
 > Sent: Thursday, October 01, 2009 5:41 PM
 > To: Runnels, Mary
 > Subject: Permission

> Dear Dr. Tallent Runnels,

> Yes, I did e-mail you earlier this week. I am preparing to research
 > international students' adjustment to U.S. college life and academic culture
 > at
 > the University of Southern Mississippi as part of my dissertation for a Ph.D.
 > in adult education. I would like to use your survey instrument, along with
 > two
 > other survey instruments so that I can compare the results of the data from

郵件 :: INBOX: RE: Permission

第 1 頁，共 1 頁

日期: Fri, 2 Oct 2009 08:50:00 +1300
 寄件: Colleen Ward <Colleen.Ward@vuw.ac.nz>
 人:
 收件: "w710931@mail.usm.edu" <w710931@mail.usm.edu>
 人:
 主旨: RE: Permission

YOU CA DOWNLOAD FROM MY WEB-SITE

GOOD LUCK WITH YOUR RESEARCH

COLLEEN
 Professor Colleen Ward
 Director, Centre of Applied Cross-cultural Research
 Te Pae Rangahau Tauhokai Ahurea

School of Psychology
 Te Kura Matai Hinengaro
 PO Box 600
 Victoria University of Wellington
 Te Whare Wananga o te Upoko o te Ika a Maui
 Wellington
 New Zealand

Phone: 64-4-4636037
 Fax: 64-4-4635402
 Email: Colleen.Ward@vuw.ac.nz
<http://www.vuw.ac.nz/psyc/staff/colleen-ward/index.aspx>

From: w710931@mail.usm.edu [w710931@mail.usm.edu]
 Sent: Friday, October 02, 2009 4:46 AM
 To: Colleen Ward
 Subject: Permission

Dear Dr. Ward,

My name is Chung-Hsien Hsu, a doctoral student in Adult Education at The University of Southern Mississippi. I am an international student from Taiwan.

I am very honored to have the chance to read your article published in 1999, The Measurement of Sociocultural Adaptation. I am interested in issues related to international students' cultural adaptation. As part of my dissertation, I would like to investigate cross-cultural issues. Therefore, can you please provide to me your questionnaire mentioned in the article above?

Any assistance that you can offer to me will be greatly appreciated. Thank you for your kind consideration.

Cordially,

Chung-Hsien Hsu

REFERENCES

- Alfred, M. V. (2002). The promise of sociocultural theory in democratizing adult education. In M. V. Alfred (Ed.). *New directions for adult and continuing education: No. 96. Learning and sociocultural contexts: Implications for adults, community, and workplace education* (pp. 3-14). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Barlow, A. R. (1999). Global issues confronting student affairs leaders. In J. C. Dalton (Ed.). *New Directions for Student Services: No. 86. Beyond borders: How international developments are changing student affairs practice* (pp. 53-57). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Bonetta, L. (2007). Foreign faculty face challenges. *Science Journal*. doi: 10.1126/science.opms.r0700027.
- Bogdan, R. C., & Biklen, S. K. (2007). *Qualitative research for education: An introduction to theory and methods*. Boston, MA: Pearson Education.
- Boyd, R. D. (1991). *Personal transformations in small groups: A Jungian perspective*. New York: Routledge.
- Britton, S., Chamberlain, T., Davis, C., Easley, D., Grunden, C., & Williams, J. (2003). *Assessing international student perceptions of the classroom environment at a U.S. business school*. Unpublished master's thesis, Indiana University, Bloomington. Retrieved from <http://www.indiana.edu/~iuspa/Journal/2003/Assessing%20International%20Students.pdf>
- Castello, A. B., & Osborne, J. W. (2005). Best practices in exploratory factor analysis:

Four recommendations for getting the most from your Analysis. *Practical Assessment, Research & Evaluation*, 10(7), 1-9.

Chaney, L. H., & Martin, J. S. (2005). Intercultural communication: Bridging cultural difference. In J. C. Scott, C. Blaszczynski, & D. J. Green (Eds.). *Communication for a global society: National business education association yearbook, no. 43* (pp. 100-114). Reston, VA: National Business Education Association.

Cemalcilar, Z., Falbo, T., & Stapleton, L. M. (2005). Cyber communication: A new opportunity for international students' adaptation? *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 29, 91-110. Retrieved from www.sciencedirect.com

Chirkov, V., Vansteenkiste, M., Tao, R., & Lynch, M. (2007). The role of self-determined motivation and goals for study abroad in the adaptation of international students. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 31, 199-222. Retrieved from www.sciencedirect.com

Chirkov, V. I., Safdar, S., Guzman, J., & Playford, K. (2008). Further examining the role motivation to study abroad plays in the adaptation of international students in Canada. *International Journal of Intercultural Relation*, 32, 427-440. Retrieved from www.sciencedirect.com

Creswell, J. W. (2007). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five traditions* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage

Daloz, L. A. (1999). *Mentor: Guiding the journey of adult learners* (2nd ed.). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Deci, E. L., & Ryan, R. M. (2002). *Handbook of self-determination research*. Rochester, NY: The University of Rochester Press.

- Deci, E. L., & Ryan, R. M. (2000). Self-determination theory and the facilitation of intrinsic motivation, social development and well-being. *American Psychologist*, 55, 68-78. Retrieved from www.apa.org/pubs/journals/amp
- Finger, M. (2005). Globalization. In L. M. English (Ed.), *International encyclopedia of adult education* (pp. 269-273). London: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Furnham, A. & Bochner, S. (1986). *Culture shock: Psychological reactions to unfamiliar environments*. New York: Methuen.
- Grant, S. R. (1999). The internationalizing influences of new communications technologies. In J. C. Dalton (Ed.) *New Directions for Student Services*, no. 86 (pp. 59-65). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Greenblatt, S. (2006). International students and diversity in American higher education. *International Journal of Diversity in Organizations, Communities and Nations*, 5(2), 163-171. Retrieved from <http://ijd.cgpublisher.com>
- IIE. (2008). *Open Doors 2008: International Students in the United States*. Retrieved from <http://opendoors.iienetwork.org>
- Kegan, R. (1994). *In over our heads: The mental demands of modern life*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Kim, S. (2006). Academic oral communication needs of East Asian international graduate students in non-science and non-engineering fields. *English for Specific Purposes*, 25(4), 479-489. Retrieved from www.sciencedirect.com
- Kohls, L. R. (1984). *Survival kit for overseas living: For Americans planning to live and work*. Boston: Intercultural Press.
- Krapels, R. H. & Davis, B. D. (2005). Culture shock and reverse culture shock:

- Developing coping skills. In J. C. Scott, C. Blaszczynski, & D. J. Green (Eds.). *Communication for a global society: National business education association yearbook, no. 43* (pp. 115-131). Reston, VA: National Business Education Association.
- Lee, E. L. (2007). Linguistic and cultural factors in East Asian students' oral participation in U.S. university classrooms. *International Education*, 36, 27-47. Retrieved from <http://findarticles.com>
- Lee, M. Y. & Sheared, V. (2002). Socialization and immigrant students' learning in adult education programs. In M. V. Alfred (Ed.). *Learning and sociocultural contexts: Implications for adults, community, and workplace education. New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education, no. 96* (pp. 27-36). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Lin, N. (2001). Building a network theory of social capital. In N. Lin, K. S. Cook, & R. S. Burt (Eds.). *Social capital: Theory and research* (pp. 28-51). New Brunswick, NJ: Aldine.
- Lin, N., Cook, K., & Burt, R. S. (Eds.). (2001). *Social capital: theory and research*. New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction.
- Mendis, P. (2005). Americanization of globalization. *Public Manager*, 34, 3-8.
- Merriam, S. B., Caffarella, R. S., & Baumgartner, L. M. (2007). *Learning in adulthood: A comprehensive guide* (3rd Edition). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Merriam, S. B., & Young, S. K. (2008). Non-western perspectives on learning and knowing. In S. B. Merriam (Ed.). *Third update on adult learning theory. New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education, no. 119* (pp. 71-81). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

- Merriam, S. B. (2009). *Qualitative research: A guide to design and implementation*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Mezirow, J. (1991). *Transformative dimensions of adult learning*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Mezirow, J. (2000). Learning to think like an adult: Core concepts of transformation theory. In J. Mezirow (Ed.). *Learning as transformation: Critical perspectives on a theory in progress* (pp. 3-34). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Miyazaki, Y., Bodenhorn, N., Zalaquett, C., & Nf, K. (2008). Factorial structure of brief cope for international students attending U.S. colleges. *College Student Journal*, 42(3), 795-806. Retrieved from <http://www.projectinnovation.biz/csj.html>
- Moustakas, C. (1994). *Phenomenological research methods*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Mullen, G. E., & Tallen-Runnels, M. K. (2006). Student outcomes and perceptions of instructors' demands and support in online and traditional classrooms. *The Internet and Higher Education*, 9, 257-266. Retrieved from www.elsevier.com/wps/find/journaldescription.cws_home
- Perrucci, R., & Hu, H. (1995). Satisfaction with social and educational experiences among international graduate students. *Research in Higher Education*, 36, 491-508.
- Peterson, D. M., Briggs, P., Dreasher, L., Horner, D. D., and Nelson, T. (1999). Contributions of international students and programs to campus diversity. In J. C. Dalton (Ed.). *New Directions for Student Services: No. 86. Beyond borders: How international developments are changing student affairs practice* (pp. 67-77). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

- Pohlmann, J. T. (2004). Use and interpretation of factor analysis in The Journal of Educational Research: 1992-2002. *The Journal of Educational Research*, 98(1), 14-23.
- Taras, V. & Rowney, J. (2007). Effects of cultural diversity on in-class communication and student project team dynamics: Creating synergy in the diverse classroom. *International Studies in Educational Administration* 35(2), 66-81. Retrieved from www.cceam.org
- Taylor, E. W. (2008). Transformative learning theory. In S. B. Merriam (Ed.). *Third update on adult learning theory. New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education*, no. 119 (pp. 5-15). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Townes, G. (2008, November 27). Foreign students increase financial coffers at U.S. colleges and universities. *New York Amsterdam News*. Retrieved from www.amsterdamnews.com
- Trice, A. G. (2004). Mixing it up: International graduate students' social interactions with American students. *Journal of College Student Development*, 45(6), 671-687. Retrieved from www.jcsdonline.org
- Wang, C. M. (2004, October). *Taking synchronous online courses in the United States: The perceptions for Asian students*. Association for Educational Communications and Technology, Chicago, IL. [ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED485018]
- Ward, C. & Kennedy, A. (1999). The measurement of sociocultural adaptation. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 23, 659-677. Retrieved from www.sciencedirect.com

Wei, M., Heppner, P. P., Mallen, M. J., Ku, T. Y., Liao, Y. H., & Wu, T. F. (2007).

Acculturative stress, perfectionism, years in the United States, and depression among Chinese international students. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, 54(4), 385-394. Retrieved from www.apa.org/pubs/journals/cou/

Ye, J. (2006a). Traditional and online support networks in the cross-cultural adaptation of

Chinese international students in the United States. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*, 11(3), 863-876. Retrieved from <http://jcmc.indiana.edu>

Ye, J. (2006b). An examination of acculturative stress, interpersonal social support, and

use of online ethnic social groups among Chinese international students. *Howard Journal of Communications*, 17(1), 1-20. Retrieved from www.informaworld.com/smpp/title~content=t713771688~db=all